Kapitzke, Melissa

The ‘Not Yet Being’ of Education: How Hope Inspires Teaching Practice of Elementary Teachers in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

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Abstract: Hope is a complex concept that is often used simply in common vernacular. It can be understood as positive anticipation for the future and its power can be experienced when we feel despair or discouragement. Currently, despair and discouragement have become a lived reality for many teachers, evidenced by high teacher burnout rates. Teacher burnout is a topic that many popular publications offer opinion or rhetoric on; however, there is little to be seen as an adequate response to the phenomenon. As such, now would be a time to investigate hope. The research presented in this thesis explored the way hope inspires elementary teachers in their practice with an aim to offer suggestions and solutions to the teacher burnout problem.

Eleven elementary teachers working in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, were interviewed in the course of this study about the role that hope plays in their professional work. The research presented in this thesis takes a qualitative approach and used thematic analysis to interpret the data represented by interview transcripts. Three themes were determined: *Hope for Connection* explores relationships and community, *Hope for Growth* describes development and maturation, and *Hope for Engagement* illustrates action taken to influence the future towards a desired outcome. The distinctiveness of each theme is explored, as well as their interconnectedness. The researcher used the themes determined through the analysis to formulate an answer to the research question "How does hope inspire the professional practice of elementary teachers?". Responses from participants indicate that the hopes represented in the themes informed and motivated many practical decisions teachers made in their practice, such as classroom management, lesson planning, and assessment. The experiences of hope expressed by teachers in relation to their work with students could often be connected to possible mitigation of burnout factors. Additionally, the hopes for *Connection, Growth* and *Engagement* teachers expressed for students were also hopes they expressed for themselves personally. An unexpected outcome of conversations with participants was the expression of how uncomfortable and strange it was for them to reflect and discuss the concept of hope so extensively.

The unfamiliarity of discussing hope, as well as the obstacles teachers shared with regards to experiencing hope, could indicate deficiencies in ensuring hope for *Connection, Growth* and *Engagement* are present for teachers. The possible gaps in actualizing hopes for teachers provide a starting point to determine solutions to the teacher burnout problem. As teachers use their hopes for students to inform the decisions of their practice, educational stakeholders should consider hopes for teachers to plan and inform decisions that design a hope-fostering culture in education as a means to decrease teacher burnout.

Keywords: teacher burnout, teacher wellbeing, hope

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abbreviations

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
TRCC	Truth and Reconciliation Comission of Canada
CTF	Canadian Teachers Federation
EPSB	Edmonton Public School Board
TENK	Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity
FOIP	Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

1 Introduction

As a primary school teacher, I have experienced the challenges of the profession. I have only taught for three years, but have already (frequently) wondered to myself how I will ever continue on long enough to make this my career. During my education degree I recall a professor telling us "50% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching." I remember thinking that there is no way that would be me; I am passionate about children and education and no challenge could ever eclipse my convictions. However, here I am, I left my classroom to pursue a Masters degree after working in a classroom for only two years. After doing the bulk of my research for this thesis I returned to the classroom for another year and even after learning what I had about hope, still found myself confronted with the same recurring thoughts of how I will ever survive this profession.

Unfortunately, my story is not unique. A simple search of "teacher burnout" into Google results in a number of articles that emerge from popular publications discussing "the teacher burnout epidemic," burnout prevention tips for teachers, warning signs for educators of burnout, staggering statistics, and descriptions of teacher burnout as "work induced depression." (Ansley et al., 2018; Elias, 2012; Diaz, 2018; Provenzano, 2013, 2016; Rankin, 2016; Terada, 2018; University of Missouri, 2018) While these are relatively recent articles, the concept of burnout was first coined in 1974 by Freudenberger and was attributed to those in "helping professions," such as teaching (Aluja et al., 2005, p. 67). It can seem discouraging that burnout has been a concern for over 40 years, and yet it appears that the situation has not improved. What hope is there then that it will get better?

As my first degree was a Bachelor of Arts with a study major focusing on psychology, I am very interested in how mindsets and mental wellbeing impact people's actions. It is from this perspective that I became curious about how to investigate a defense against teacher burnout. I started thinking about how individuals overcome adverse challenges and was led to consider the role of hope. In my youth I discovered a deep interest in stories of World War II. Upon reflection of this, I believe it is the hope that inspired and intrigued me in these stories, how despite the

confrontation of insurmountable challenges and despair, there were always people who were brave, people who did what they could to move forward and help others. This has led me to wonder about the role of hope in education; how it can inspire teachers in the difficult work that they do and inspire them to overcome the challenges they are confronted with. The word inspire is chosen with intentionality, as the origin of the word "inspire" comes from the Latin, *inspirare*, which means "to breathe into," and shares a connection with the word for spirit (Meriam-Webster, n.d., section 3, para. 2). From this origin, the word can be understood as to breathe *life* into. The word "inspire*"* and its definition make for a great contrast to the concept of burnout, which suggests to die out. If considering the imagery of a fire "burning out," the flame is dying. However, when a fire is dying out, and you are left with the dim glow of an ember, all it takes is to breathe into the ember a few times and the flame re-ignites. This leads me to wonder how hope inspires, or breathes life into teachers so they persevere through challenges and rather than burning out, the fire that motivates them remains alive.

Sister Joan Chittister describes hope as the "green shoot in the midst of struggle" (2003, p. ix). The role hope plays in overcoming obstacles has been explored both philosophically and through research. Hope has an important role to play in the way individuals encounter difficult circumstances, and a number of studies have investigated this role hope plays. What constitutes as a "difficult" circumstance is subjective, and as such, the body of research explores hope in a variety of "difficult" circumstances, which helps to provide a depth of understanding. For example, hope research has included perspectives of youth experiencing homelessness (Herth, 1998), refugee children and families (Yohani, 2008), rural youth in South Africa living in poverty (Cherrington, 2015; Cherrington & De Lange, 2016) and critically or terminally ill patients (Harris & Larsen, 2008; Hedtke, 2014). In addition to the diverse range of difficult circumstances, hope has been investigated in a variety of fields of study that are used to help individuals overcome these difficult circumstances, such as nursing (Herth & Cutcliffe, 2002; Kylmä & Vehviläinen-Julkunen, 1997; Miller, 2007), social work (Collins, 2015; Schwartz, Tiamiyu, & Dwyer, 2007), family therapy (Flaskas et al., 2007), and individual counseling (Chamodraka et al., 2017; Larsen et al., 2007; Marsden, 2012). From this breadth of research it can be concluded that hope is a reasonable approach to consider in response to the current trend of teacher burnout outlined earlier.

Though one might assume that teacher burnout is an indication of hopelessness becoming more prevalent, it is important to consider how hope and hopelessness are intimately connected. If teachers burning out and leaving the profession is evidence of hopelessness, then the teachers who are still practicing have some gradient of hope. The purpose of my research is to explore how hope and professional practice in education are connected, and to celebrate the hopeful work teachers are already doing. As such, this thesis will focus on one main research question:

How does hope inspire the professional practice of elementary teachers?

To define hope I will use reflections from Ernst Bloch (1986) and describe it as a positive anticipation of what may occur in the future, "an intention towards possibility that has still not become" (p. 7). An important aspect of hope to understand is that it is an emotion, as well as a cognitive process that can creatively imagine a future, as well as motivate an individual towards action into that future.

This thesis is based on the assumption that teachers already implement hope-inspired practices in their work, and as such the research question is worded as such. Writer, educator, and philosopher bell hooks states, "educating is always a vocation rooted in hopefulness. As teachers we believe that learning is possible, that nothing can keep an open mind from seeking after knowledge and finding a way to know" (2003, p. xiv). Her work centers on justice in education, and how education can provide a more equitable society for all. She advocates that a just society happens through the partnership between students and teachers, and that the results of quality education positively impact the greater community through connections with others. It is her idea of a collective improvement that shows how hope resides in education. These beliefs held by hooks connect with Bloch's definition of hope, in that she expresses education as an orientation towards the possibility of a positive future that has not yet emerged. Education as a means to achieve a hope in a better future is also reflected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and is present in Sustainable Development Goal 4: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". When discussing the rationale behind goal 4, UNESCO expresses the importance of opportunities in education as being absolutely necessary for the eradication of poverty, and highlights the way that education is closely connected with the attainment of the other goals

aimed to improve global health, wellbeing, and development in sustainable and responsible ways (2016, p.7). To see education as vital for the fulfillment of all the sustainable development goals shows the importance of education in the hopeful journey of positive anticipation for the future. Through the inherent hopefulness of education, teachers are already engaging in hopeful work. This thesis aims to explore the hopeful work teachers are already doing, as well as find avenues to support teachers in ways that foster hopefulness and helps them to experience hope in their work. Through focusing on hope in education and from the insights provided by teachers, there is a possibility of applying this to the problem of teacher burnout and pursuing a better future for the wellbeing of teachers. While earlier it was stated that the breadth of research that exists covers a broad range of challenges and fields of study, research on hope in the field of education, particularly in how it applies to educators is scant. The research presented in this thesis endeavors to begin to fill this gap.

In the next chapter, I will elaborate about the theoretical framework supporting my research. Instead of detailing the specific context of this research project separately, I made the choice to present it together, interwoven with the theories. By doing this, the theoretical connections are highlighted in the context specific practices of the elementary teachers interviewed in the city of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. In the third chapter I defend a critical realist approach to this thesis that informs a qualitative approach and uses thematic analysis to analyze the data. Additionally, chapter three will outline the process of the semi-structured interview as the method of data collection and provide a brief overview of the research participants. Chapter four provides a comprehensive description of the steps taken to complete the thematic analysis, and chapter five presents the findings from the thematic analysis using excerpts extracted from the data set. Chapter six answers the research question and discusses the findings, drawing connections with the theory introduced in chapter two. Following this, chapter seven defends the quality of the research conducted by evaluating the ethics, reliability and credibility, as well as exploring possible limitations. Finally, in chapter eight I offer concluding reflections and considerations, as well as future hopes.

2 Theoretical Framework

This section will explore many important theoretical concepts and practical contexts in relation to the research completed and presented in this thesis. First, I describe teacher burnout and then go into depth about how it relates to the specific teaching context of the province of Alberta in Canada. From this, I explain why hope is a remedy to consider in response to the challenges presented and elaborate on what hope is. The three main perspectives on hope that are discussed were selected for the way they connect with the themes that emerged in the thematic analysis prior to the final elaboration of this theory chapter. These specific concepts of hope that are explored are hope and self-actualization, hope and relationships, and hope and action. This section concludes with how these specific components of hope connect with education in meaningful ways.

2.1 Teacher Burnout

Burnout has been a concern for many years, first coined by Freudenberger in 1974, to describe the exhaustion expressed by individuals in "helping" careers such as counselors, nurses, teachers and social workers (Aluja et al., 2005, p. 67). Maslach and Jackson (1981) assert that the impact of burnout on the workplace is substantial and can lead to a decline in quality of work and morale, as well as increases in job turnover and absenteeism (p.100). Furthermore, burnout contributes to personal health concerns such as "exhaustion, insomnia, increase in drug or alcohol use, and marital and family problems" (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, p. 100). To further investigate the causes of burnout, Maslach and Jackson established a tool for measuring burnout called the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Their inventory assesses three key facets to determine burnout in individuals, Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment (p. 101). Items on the inventory measured responses based on how often and how strongly an individual experienced the outlined item. On the Maslach Burnout Inventory, 9 items are allocated to measure Emotional Exhaustion, defined as an individual feeling overextended emotionally and exhausted by their work (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, p. 101). A sample item is "I feel emotionally drained by my work" (p. 102). In addition to this, there were 5 items to measure Depersonalization, which is the feeling that a person distances themselves from their clients and may start to blame the client for the problems they are experiencing (p. 101). An example of an

item measuring Depersonalization is "I worry this job is hardening me emotionally" (p. 103). Finally, there were 8 items to measure Personal Accomplishment, an individual's feelings of success and competency in their work (p. 101). An example of an item measuring Personal Accomplishment is "I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job" (p. 103). The factors of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization indicate burnout if the scores are high, while the factor Personal Accomplishment indicates burnout if the score is low.

Teacher burnout specifically has been a topic of interest for researchers. In 2003, Dorman created a model of teacher burnout by expanding on the three key factors discussed by Maslach and Jackson. Dorman's premise was that for too long research regarding teacher burnout focused on individual personality traits that lead to placing blame on individual teachers for their exhaustion (2003, p. 36). Alternatively, he proposed a model with eight predictors within a teaching context that connect to the three original burnout factors from the Maslach Burnout Inventory outlined above. Of the eight predictors Dorman suggests, he characterizes five of them as organizational variables (Classroom Environment, School Environment, Work Pressure, Role Conflict, Role Overload), which are beyond the control of an individual teacher (p. 43). The remaining three predictors (Teaching Efficacy, Self-esteem, and External Locus of Control) are categorized as personality variables (p. 43). He used a variety of instruments to measure each predictor individually and then analyzed the relationship each predictor had with the three factors established by Maslach and Jackson.

Dorman (2003) found a number of significant pathways between the predictors he proposed and the original three factors presented by Maslach and Jackson (p.44). For example, Role Overload was a prominent variable that impacted Work Pressure and subsequently Emotional Exhaustion (p. 44). Another important variable was Role Conflict, as it negatively impacted School Environment and therefore increased ratings of Depersonalization. Classroom Environment, the final organization variable, was found to have negative relationships with Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization. The three personality variables, Teaching Efficacy, Self-Esteem, and External Locus of Control all showed relationships connected to Maslach and Jackson's Personal Accomplishment factor. Dorman's findings show that rather than simply assuming teacher burnout is a result of dysfunctional personality traits within a teacher, organizational variables

that exist beyond the control of the teacher have significant impacts on teacher burnout as well. This broader understanding offered by Dorman expands the discussion surrounding teacher burnout to consider the contextual factors and systematic structures of education, rather than simply an analysis and diagnosis of individual teachers.

For example, Tatar and Horenczyk (2002) investigated the concept of diversity related burnout in teachers as distinguishably different from the broadly defined burnout as established by Maslach and Jackson. Their study looked specifically at the context of cultural diversity present in classrooms. The findings from their study showed that diversity related burnout was "empirically distinguishable from, albeit correlated with, the more traditional notion of teacher burnout" (p. 404). They attributed this burnout to a lack of information available to teachers as well as not enough opportunity to develop the skills needed to properly cope with the new challenges of working in culturally heterogeneous classrooms (pp. 397-398). This relates to the predictors of School and Classroom Environment from Dorman's model (2003). If teachers feel neglected in their professional development to adequately teach their students, this may lead to negative feelings towards the School Environment. Additionally, this lack of information may contribute to teachers feeling distanced from their students, negatively impacting their evaluation of the Classroom Environment. Both of these circumstances would then lead to increased feelings of Depersonalization and Emotional Exhaustion, according to Dorman's model. Additionally, Tatar and Horenzyk (2002) stated that teachers of highly culturally heterogeneous classrooms reported that additional work is required of them, as they must modify course content and contact families more frequently regarding the progress of their child's learning (p. 404). This would contribute to Dorman's predictor of Role Overload and Work Pressure, leading to Emotional Exhaustion.

Another study investigated teacher burnout of regular education professionals in inclusive classrooms. Talmor et al. (2005) found that when the demands placed upon teachers to provide successful inclusion do not match the means provided to them to achieve such success, the result is a sense of burnout (p. 227). From this they conclude, "if a teacher does not get the means to achieve their expectations, they will consequently feel helpless and will not be able to perform their role as a teacher" (p. 227). Again, this context presented by Talmor et al. (2005) can be applied to Dorman's (2003) model of teacher burnout. Inadequate resources and support for

teachers to confront challenges they are faced with can cause a negative perspective of the School Environment, increasing Depersonalization. If teachers attempt to fill this gap themselves, this could increase feelings of Work Pressure and Role Overload, leading to increased Emotional Exhaustion. When teachers cannot provide successful inclusion, despite their best personal efforts, this would lead to a decrease in Teaching Efficacy and Self-Esteem, and therefore impact their sense of Personal Achievement. All of this contributes to an overall experience of teacher burnout. Talmor et al. (2005) also reported that teachers who felt an increase of disciplinary issues and social concerns were present in inclusive education expressed greater levels of burnout (p. 227). Hostile, defiant, or even violent behavior from students would create a negative Classroom Environment, thus leading to an increase in both Depersonalization and Emotional Exhaustion. With these studies, it is clear that the context within which teachers work can have a great impact on their vulnerability to experience burnout.

2.2 Teaching in the Context of the Canadian Province of Alberta

In Canada, educational policy and responsibility is established at the provincial level, and so I am focusing on Alberta, the province within which the study took place. Many of the concerns outlined in the studies discussed in the previous section pertain to the current situational context of education in Alberta, making the work of teachers challenging. Attrition rates of Alberta teachers leaving the profession in the first five years range from approximately 25% (Alberta Education, 2013, p. 18) to 40% (Clandinin et al., 2015, p. 1). When considering the research explored above regarding teacher burnout, and the context of Alberta classrooms, it becomes easy to understand why this number may be so high.

For example, immigration to Alberta has been increasing according to 2016 census data. Approximately 1 in 10 individuals residing in Alberta are not Canadian citizens and 23% of individuals have an immigrant mother tongue (Alberta Government, 2017, p.4). Slightly less than 50% of individuals who have immigrated to Alberta were 24 years of age or younger, showing that many of them are populating Alberta's schools (Alberta Government, 2017, p. 4). As stated by Tatar and Horenczyk's (2002), this can lead to increased classroom complexities, thus contributing to Role Overload and Work Pressure, increasing Depersonalization and Emotional Exhaustion, as well as decreasing Teaching Efficacy and Personal Achievement, resulting in cultural diversity related burnout (p. 404).

In addition, Canada is making strides through a Truth and Reconciliation process to bring to light Canada's colonial history and the impact it has on Indigenous communities. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRCC) has established Calls to Action that will help foster reconciliation between the nation of Canada and Indigenous peoples (2012). A number of the Calls to Action are related to education, such as the development and implementation of culturally appropriate curricula for all students in basic education, from kindergarten to grade twelve. The information to be included in curriculum should address the legacy of residential schools and history of treaties, celebrate the diversity of Indigenous culture and worldviews, and acknowledge the contributions of Indigenous people and communities to Canada both in the past and present. Corresponding resources to this curricular content must also be developed. Additionally, educators are to be trained in Indigenous ways of knowing and to teach in culturally inclusive ways (TRCC, 2012, p. 2, p. 7). Without the proper resources and support, these changes within education can lead to teacher burnout as discussed above.

Another concern in Canadian society that has implications in classrooms is the state of mental wellbeing in youth. The Kids Help Phone (2016) reported that in Canada one in five teenagers have seriously considered suicide. Additionally, Canada has the third highest rate of suicide in the industrialized world and suicide is the second leading cause of death in Canadians aged 15-24 years of age (Magnusson, 2018, p. 16). The concern over mental wellbeing in Canada's young people has important implications for teacher wellbeing. Newell and MacNeil (2010) state, "the chronic day-to-day exposure to clients and the distress they experience may become emotionally taxing" (p. 58) and result in compassion fatigue or professional burnout.

As well as these concerns, there has been a rise of violence in classrooms across Canada (Vomiero, 2018; Wong, 2018). In a report made by the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), four out of ten teachers have experienced violence at school, and 70% have reported that not only the number of incidences of violence has increased, but the severity of violence has as well (Montgomery, 2018; People for Education, 2018). However, it was reported that the CTF expects the actual occurrence of violence in classrooms is higher than what is represented by these statistics because most violent interactions go unreported by teachers. One reason the CTF believes there is an increase in violence towards teachers is due to an inadequate provision of

resources to train teachers on how to deal with violent situations. Additionally, a lack of resources to support students with special needs may lead to an increase in frustration for these students, who then may engage in violence as a way to express frustration. Regardless of the reasoning for the incidences, the CTF is clear that teachers who are subjected to increased violence are more susceptible to depression, physical injuries, headaches, fatigue, and burnout. This corresponds with Talmor et al.'s (2005) findings that behavioural difficulties in classrooms are connected to increased reports of teacher burnout (p. 227).

The struggles of teachers explored above are exacerbated further by structural and organization limitations. An audit performed on schools in Alberta (Alberta Education, 2019) showed that classroom sizes have not improved despite millions of dollars allocated to school districts to solve this problem. Large class sizes make it difficult to meet the needs of students and increase demands of teachers that are unrealistic (French, 2018). The large class sizes would impact a teacher's experience in the Classroom Environment, as there is potentially an increase in behavioral concerns that need to be addressed, as well as a decrease in the ability to develop quality personal relationships with their students. As a consequence, this could increase a teacher's feelings of Depersonalization and Emotional Exhaustion, making them more susceptible to teacher burnout. Additionally, there is inevitably an impact on the workload of teachers, as they have more students to prepare content for, greater number of families to be in contact with, increased demands of differentiating content for the increased number of students, and more assessment to complete. In 2015, Alberta Education published an *Alberta Teacher Workload Study* that shows 87% of teachers reported an increase in teaching expectations (56% identified a significant increase in teaching expectations) (p. 57). Along with this, 43% of teacher respondents expressed a decrease in teacher autonomy. This demonstrates an increase in Role Overload and Work Pressure, again increasing Depersonalization and Emotional Exhaustion. A decreased feeling of teacher autonomy could negatively impact a teacher's feelings of Teaching Efficacy and Self-Esteem, decreasing their feelings of Personal Achievement. Again, this indicates an inclination towards teacher burnout. By exploring some of the challenges teachers in Alberta face, various predictors outlined in Dorman's (2003) model connect to the experiences of teachers and begins to provide an understanding as to why so many teachers are burning out.

2.3 Why Hope

Hope is a topic of interest when considering a variety of challenges encountered in life and humanity. Upon deeper reflection, it is realized that hope and despair are two sides of the same coin, or as writer Clancy Sigal has said, "It's a double thing, hope and despair" (Terkel, 2003, p. 30). Chittister (2003) writes, "It is impossible to write a real book about hope without looking at the nature of struggle." (p. ix). Though initially it seems contradictory, it indeed makes sense. If we find ourselves in a situation rife with discouragement, fear, or struggle, then a desire for circumstances to be better is natural. The "dream of a better life" is the first step into hope (Bloch, 1986, p. 11). While the struggles and challenges of education are evident through the discussion in the previous section, hope is a perfect fit to research in response. If a better understanding of how hope is fostered and is present in teacher's work is developed then this has the potential to impact and inform responses to the teacher burnout concern.

Research shows that having high hope has a positive impact on an individual's life through higher self-esteem, positive affectivity (such as concentration, alertness and enthusiasm), lower anxiety, and a better ability to manage depression (Snyder, 1994, pp. 46-49). These findings are supported by a study completed by Valle et al. demonstrating that hope is a psychological strength that helps to buffer adolescents from stressful life events (2006, p. 405). It is for this reason this thesis aims to investigate how hope, as a psychological strength, can be used to combat teacher burnout and improve psychological wellbeing, for both teachers and students. The following sections will provide a more comprehensive discussion of what hope is and how it is a natural fit in the work of education.

2.4 What is Hope?

Hope has been contemplated across time, geographic locations, and cultures. For example, religious traditions from around the world that have been practiced for thousands of years, while unique in their ontological foundations, all have an underlying vision of purpose in life and death, with a pursuit towards a higher destiny (Bennett, 2011, p. 119). Theologian and philosopher Pieper (1997) describes humans as being *viators,* meaning to be "one on the way; making progress toward eternal happiness" (p. 92). Pieper asserts that as humans and finite beings, we are manifestations of incompleteness or "not yet being" (p. 93). He goes on to describe hope as the

virtue of the "not yet being" because it is what drives us towards fulfillment of ourselves. This connects to Bloch's (1986) work on hope where he describes it as people throwing themselves into the "what is becoming." (p. 3)

While hope is often used in everyday vernacular, its nature and definition are rather ethereal. Consequently, educator and psychologist Snyder (1994) attempted to solve this and proposed a Hope Theory that would succinctly describe hope in concise, cognitive terms. He describes hope as a cognitive process where an individual is able to identify goals and successfully pursue these goals (Snyder, 1994). There are three components to this theory of hope; an individual's ability to conceptualize goals, to establish pathways to achieve his or her goals, and to maintain cognitive agency to stay motivated in the pursuit of one's goals (Lopez et al., 2009, p. 37). More simply, hope is setting goals, determining ways to achieve the goal, and maintaining the will to see the goal through. While this theory provides a simple and straightforward explanation of hope, it neglects to explore the depth of hope as a human experience. It limits hope to an individualistic cognitive process and has received much criticism based on this.

Alternatively, a multi-dimensional perspective of hope is more broadly accepted in the fields of nursing, medicine, psychology, philosophy, theology and social-behavioral sciences (Herth & Cutcliff, 2002, p. 1404). For example, Dufault and Marocchio (1985) determined a model of hope that identifies six dimensions of hope that include affective (emotional), cognitive (thinking and imagining), behavioral (action), affiliative (relationships), temporal (time), and contextual (life circumstances) (cited in O'Hara, 2013, pp. 11-16). Scioli et al. (2011) describe hope as a network of personal resources that include biological, psychological, and social resources, which are rooted in different motives such as mastery, attachment, and survival (p. 80). Larsen et al. (2020) developed a multidimensional scale used to evaluate client hope that uses nine dimensions of hope; therapeutic relationship, other relationships, cognitive, emotional, temporal, behavioral, process, personal meaning (purpose) and spirituality (p. 6). Since three distinct themes were determined through the thematic analysis presented in this research, I also assert a multi-dimensional perspective. The following sections explore the three perspectives hope and self-actualization, hope and relationships, and hope and action in greater depth, as determined in relation to the themes presented in the findings section.

2.4.1 Hope and Self-Actualization

Self-actualization, a journey of personal growth towards our full potentialities, is an important concept within the movement of psychology known as humanistic psychology (Buhler, 1974, p. 3). The concept of self-actualization differentiates humanistic psychology from previous psychological schools of thought because it focuses on the human tendency towards growth, rather than a study of neurosis (Buhler, 1974, p. 3). One of the founders, Maslow (1971) proposed that all humans innately share an "active will toward health, an impulse towards growth, or towards the actualization of human potentialities" (p. 24). Another psychologist, Rogers (1946), also articulated this perspective as he wrote that individuals have an inner force for growth and an inclination towards self-actualization (p. 9). This concept of self-actualization relates clearly to the "not yet being" idea of hope, as being one on the way towards what is becoming, as described by Pieper (1997) and Bloch (1986).

Victor Frankl (2008), a psychotherapist, made the bold claim that self-actualization is not only important for personal wellbeing, but can also be lifesaving. His work is especially compelling because he used his personal experience as a prisoner in Auschwitz during the Holocaust, as well as his observations and interactions with other prisoners, to develop his professional practice after being freed called *logotherapy* (2008, p. 103). Logotherapy aimed to work with patients struggling with mental illness in a way that explores what gives their life meaning as a method of overcoming psychological challenges. Frankl recognized the importance of having a strong internal life as he watched how it helped prisoners survive in the death camp. He shared that "sensitive people who were used to a rich intellectual life may have suffered much pain, but the damage to their inner selves was less" (p. 47). He continues with depictions of how himself and the other prisoners were able to deepen their spiritual lives by building community, reflecting on lost loved ones, seeking beauty and engaging in spiritual practices together such as prayer or makeshift religious services in the corner of their huts. It was the "intensification of inner life [that] helped the prisoner find a refuge from the emptiness" (p. 50). It is these reflections that Frankl shares that show the power and strength a focus on personal mental wellness can have; in whatever capacity an individual is capable within their circumstances. He demonstrated that the work of self-actualization equips a person to face and endure challenges with hope.

2.4.2 Hope and Relationships

Relationships are essential in the ways we experience and express hope. Weingarten (2007) states, "Individuals are notoriously prone to despair. Pragmatically, expecting people to summon hope on their own when they feel most dispirited seems unwise, even cruel" (p. 14). When experiencing despair or discouragement, the amount of intentionality to pull oneself out of this state of mind can feel immense, especially as despair and discouragement can significantly compromise one's feeling of strength. How can we expect that in our weakest moments, we alone can summon the resilience needed to overcome these experiences? As such, relationships become essential for hope to emerge. Even to consider the example of Frankl in the previous section, it was not he alone who engaged in the inner life to maintain strength, but it was he in practice with many others who supported one another.

The connection between hope and relationships is clear when looking at the criticisms that have been directed towards Snyder's (1994) hope theory. As previously mentioned, Snyder's theory has been criticized for presenting a theory of hope that is too individualistic (Bernardo, 2010; Du & King, 2013). Further research has shown that relationships are vital to the development of hope individuals have. For example, both Bernardo (2010, p. 944), as well as Du and King (2013, p. 335), developed external factors to Snyder's Hope Theory that included family, peers and supernatural or spiritual beings. Ani (2013) found that cultural identity and connection to one's cultural community was vital for the development of hope in black youth in Cleveland and helped motivate them towards their goals (p. 410). Vacek et al. (2010) mirrored these findings when they investigated hope in ethnic minority youth participating in intervention and counseling programs (p. 109). They found that the youth grew in positive future oriented mindsets when positive aspects of cultural identity were promoted (Vacek et al., 2010, p. 108).

In fairness, Snyder also came to the realization of the importance of social factors in hope later in his career. In an interview with Ritschel (2005), Snyder discussed that he had discovered that people who measure as high hope individuals have memories of adults spending a great deal of time with them when they were children, and the inverse was found for low hope individuals (p. 75). This suggests a link between relationship and hope development. Yohani (2008) also explored the link between relationship and hope development through an art based hope

intervention program for refugee children (p. 310). Expanding upon Snyder's comments of the importance of adult relationship on hope development in children, Yohani's research shows that the hope of children has an immense impact on the hope of their families as well (2008, p. 318), which highlights that hope can be social.

Another relational aspect of hope can be seen in the value placed in collective goals. Jacobs (2005) asserts that:

> Hope is social in nature, rather than individual, and is wrapped up in the web of social relations that each of us inhabits. Hope is decidedly not about individual aims, desires or ambitions; it is not possible as an "I" but only as a "we" - or more properly, as the articulation or joining together of individuals. (p. 785)

Research has confirmed this, as high hope individuals show an interest in and are invested in the goals of others and value collective goals more than low hope individuals (Lopez et al., 2009, p. 44; Ritschel, 2005, p. 77). Additionally, there are many examples of social progresses, dreams of a better life, which have been built upon and fulfilled due to collective hope and goals. Solnit (2016) highlights that progression of the twentieth century such as women's rights to vote, the civil rights movement, the fall of the Berlin wall, and disarmament deals are based in the communal hope of groups of people that believed in a better world together.

Finally, our social connection with others is an important component of the journey towards self-actualizing. Fromm (1947) states:

> Our own growth, happiness, and strength are based on the respect for these forces, and one cannot violate them in others and remain untouched oneself at the same time. The respect for life, that of others as well as one's own, is the concomitant of the process of life itself and a condition of psychic health. (p. 225)

Fromm's quote shows that how we connect with others and our relationships directly relate to our personal ability to grow fully. A part of developing in self-actualization is to hope for a better life for and with others, as well as for us. To impede on a full life for others is to impede our development into our own humanity. Freire (1993) echoed Fromm's sentiments when he said, "Dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it, as a *distortion* of the vocation of becoming more

human" (p. 26, emphasis in original). Again, if hope is a journey of the viator into the not yet being, into becoming fully human, then to truly experience self-actualization and fulfillment of hope one cannot neglect the need to connect with others and care for them.

2.4.3 Hope as Action

The final important component of hope I will discuss is action. Action is important because it allows the hopeful individual to be an active part of developing the "not yet being" rather than compliantly waiting for the "not yet being" to arrive on it's own. Solnit (2016) shows the importance of action in hope as it distinguishes hope from "the certainty of both optimists and pessimists. Optimists think it will all be fine without our involvement; pessimists take the opposite position; both excuse themselves from action. [Hope is] the belief that what we do matters" (p. xiv). Her words are important because they develop an understanding of where the strength in hope lies. Some accuse hope as shallow for simply "hoping for the best," however Solnit clarifies that this is a trait of optimism, not of hope. Another way of describing this simple hope is what Jacobs refers to as "naïve hope" (2005, p. 791). Alternatively, he asserts a concept of "critical hope" that motivates an individual to reflect on what is hoped for and then intervene in our circumstances to pursue this outcome (Jacobs, 2005, p. 797). These reflections of action and pursuit connect well with Pieper's imagery of humanity on a journey. His descriptions of hope as the not yet being in relation to a viator journey shows movement, which infers action. Chittister also reflects this idea as she describes hope as "a series of small actions that transform darkness into light. It is putting one foot in front of the other when we can find no reason to do so at all" (p. 103, 2003). Additionally, Bloch writes of the importance of action as a component of hope, stating, "Hope is a directing act of a cognitive kind" (1986, p. 12). The action component of hope corresponds better with Snyder's (1994) hope theory than the social component discussed in the previous section. Snyder summarizes hope as "Hope = Mental Willpower + Waypower for Goals." (1994, p. 10). Willpower is to maintain motivation in pursuit of goals, while waypower is to conceive of a variety of ways to achieve goals (pp. 7-8). The strength of Snyder's work is that it emphasizes the mental strength and action required for hope to exist.

Whether hope is interpreted as being complemented by action or not changes the strength and inspiration hope has to offer a person. For example, Terkel (2003) interviewed a variety of individuals on their perspectives and experiences of hope. LaRoque, a war veteran, told Terkel

that hope is a "wasted emotion" that one expresses when they want to win the lottery and that military individuals do not allow themselves to think about it (2003, p. 42). Instead, the veteran described himself as "optimistic" that there is a wonderful future ahead but "it's not hope that's going to bring it about; it's going to be intelligent action." (p. 46). This sentiment represented by LaRoque dismisses the power of hope by neglecting the action component of hope, and is more reminiscent to Solnit's description of an optimist, or Jacob's "naïve hope." Indeed, this expression of hope would be a wasted emotion, as it does nothing to impact the actual outcomes of what is yet to become. The "intelligent action" LaRoque alludes to in the second component of his statement reflects the "critical hope" described by Jacobs that is more robust and powerful, and it is this critical hope that inspires individuals to persevere through challenges or despair.

The action component draws together the self-actualization and relational components together in an interwoven triad. The three components of hope – self-actualization, relationship, and action, overlap and intertwine to work together within the hopeful individual. Maslow (1971) expands on the relationship of these three aspects. He explains that a part of self-actualization is to discover what you are good at and what you value. The development of these personal strengths and values lead a self-actualized individual to find "a cause they believe in, a vocation they are devoted to" (p. 192). As discussed previously, relationships are a powerful motivation to compel an individual to act. The cause or vocation a person chooses to devote themselves to has the potential to demonstrate relationship if this cause or vocation is linked to others, such as education, development projects, or service to the community. Maslow goes on to say if a person's cause or values become threatened, then they are lead to action (1971, p. 192). Similarly, Freire (1993) makes the connection that action and human potentiality, or self-actualization, is intertwined in hope. He states, "the struggle to be more fully human has already begun in the authentic struggle to transform the situation" (Freire, 1993, p. 29). In this quote the transformation of the situation is the journey towards what is to become, it is hope. The action taken by someone to engage in this struggle is a part of their development into reaching their full potentialities (self-actualization). Furthermore, Freire's concept of "praxis" combines "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (1993, p. 33). Praxis, the reflection on the world, and action to transform it, especially when motivated in connection with the humanity of others, come together in a positive pursuit of the not yet being for individuals and for society.

2.5 Hope and Education

Education is inherently hopeful. As mentioned in the introduction "education is always a vocation rooted in hopefulness" (hooks, 2003, p. xiv). Education is future oriented, looking towards the "not yet being" and the "what is to become" for students as individuals, and for society as a whole. The hopefulness of education will be discussed in this section in relation to the interconnectedness of self-actualization, relationships, and action in the development and expression of hope for both students and teachers.

Maslow (1971) wrote "the goal of education (…) is ultimately the 'self-actualization' of a person (…) it is helping the person become the best that he is able to become" (p. 163). To allow for this, he believed that school should provide opportunities for students to explore what they are good at and what their passions are. These opportunities would ultimately lead students to discover their vocation and what they wanted to do with their life (p. 185). However, the journey towards self-actualizing can happen for a student only when there is a strong, trusting relationship with the educator, the second component of hope discussed in the previous section. According to Maslow (1971), a child is only able to engage in self-actualization if they feel accepted as they are and within an environment that reduces fear and anxiety (p. 189). In addition to this, psychologist Fromm (1947) emphasizes that the difference between education and manipulation is an educator's willingness to trust in the self-actualization of their students. According to Fromm, to educate a child is to help them realize their internal potentialities, while to manipulate is to cut off what the educator deems as undesirable and that "the child will be right only if the adults put into him what is right" (p. 207). The former is to respect the child inherently for whom they are, to offer acceptance as suggested by Maslow, while the latter is to disregard the child in favour of what has been externally determined. The assertions presented by both psychologists show how relationships are important for the development of self-actualization, which has clear implications for hope in education.

Freire (1993) also examines the relationship between teacher and student in relation to education versus manipulation. He describes a traditional model of school as a "banking system" in which students are viewed as simple receptacles within which teachers deposit knowledge that is to be memorized and stored (p. 53). The banking system resembles the manipulation discussed by

Fromm, as it views teachers as putting into students what is right. Schooling that is structured and delivered in this way perpetuates cycles of oppression and is rather hopeless, as it does not provide a better "not yet being," especially for those who are oppressed. Additionally, a system that is built upon a structure that rejects the full humanity of students does not allow for the full humanity of teachers either, as previously stated that one cannot self-actualize into their humanity by rejecting the humanity of others. Alternatively, Freire (1993) suggests a model of education that views teachers and students both as "simultaneously teachers *and* students" (p. 53). The mutuality of the relationship represented in his idea acknowledges and values the insight, experience, and skills of students and recognizes that students can offer growth and teaching to teachers. An education system as described by Freire values and respects the inherent potentialities of students, similar to the concept of education suggested by Fromm, and provides an environment that allows the hopefulness of education to thrive.

Finally, Freire's (1993) challenge of traditional assumptions of school and the "banking model," where students remain passive, support the final aspect of hope discussed – hope as action. The "banking model" of school not only disrespects the relationship between teacher and student, but it also limits the depth of mental engagement for students. When the focus is for students to "receive" education, or to be filled with what is deemed "right" from the teacher, students have no space to engage, object, or question what is simply presented to them. This limits student capacity for action and denies the development of the inherent strengths and potentialities of students. However, implementing a form of education that helps students to reflect and engage in meaningful ways motivates students to act, demonstrating the third concept of hope discussed previously and shows hopefulness present in education. Freire (1993) refers to this alternative to the banking model as "problem-based education" which allows for the "*emergence* of consciousness and *critical intervention* in reality" (Freire, 1993, p. 62, emphasis in original). Education that allows for the critical discussion of reality is the first step in remaking a new reality, and as such is to practice pedagogy of hope (Freire, 2014, p. 31). To connect back to Maslow (1971), problem-based education allows students to discover a vocation to dedicate themselves to as discussed earlier in this section. Through problem-based education and application of praxis (reflection in conjunction with action) the three components of hope are drawn together. A pedagogical approach that centers on problem-based education rejects the

notion of the banking model of school, and recognizes and respects the inherent strengths and potentialities for growth within students, conducive to an environment of self-actualization. The development of these strengths and potentialities are only subject to develop within safe and trusting relationships. Students are then free to engage in dialogue surrounding the authentic and meaningful problems they are confronted. The practice of praxis draws together the reflection occurring through this discussion and motivates students toward action, or in Maslow's terms, their vocation.

While much of the discussion presented in this section is student oriented, education focused on hopefulness benefits teachers as well. As elaborated on in the first half of this chapter, the context of students impacts teacher burnout, so the context of students could also impact teacher wellbeing. To outline education as hopeful for students will also be connected to education that is hopeful for teachers. For example, there is a philosophy of teaching developed by hooks (1994) referred to as "engaged pedagogy" that emphasizes wellbeing. She asserts that a "classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow, and are empowered by the process" (p. 21). The hopeful implementation of education as discussed in the first part of this section could have implications on the predictors of burnout discussed in the first half of this chapter. For example, the meaningful relationships developed to encourage the self-actualization of students in their full potentialities could decrease feelings of Depersonalization teachers may have, in connection with the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, p. 101). Another possible connection between hopeful education for students and teachers could be through student self-actualization and discovery of skills and strengths. As teachers observe their students' growth and development, especially if the teacher has fostered an environment that has facilitated this growth, they may experience increases in Teaching Efficacy and Self-Esteem, which would increase feelings of Personal Accomplishment and decrease the risk to burnout. As such, the hopefulness of education has positive implications for both student and teacher wellbeing.

3 Methodologies and Methods

In this section I describe the critical realist approach of this thesis and how this viewpoint informed the choice to approach the research topic from a qualitative perspective, using thematic analysis to analyze the data. Also, I outline the development and use of a semi-structured interview for the process of data collection, how research participants were selected for the study, and a brief description of whom they are.

3.1 Methodological Choices

This thesis takes a critical realist approach to research. Maxwell (2012) explains that:

> Critical realists thus retain an ontological realism (there is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions, theories, and constructions) while accepting a form of epistemological constructivism and relativism (our *understanding* of this world is inevitably a construction from our own perspectives and standpoint) (p. 5, emphasis in original).

In essence, reality exists whether or not we perceive it, however our understanding and theories are always subject to change as they are built upon our subjective understanding. To approach research from a critical realist perspective allows one to explore and analyze content in a way that takes into consideration reality and causal relationships through a lens that acknowledges an individual's subjective understanding of this reality. Fletcher (2017) states that this "makes [critical realism] useful for analyzing social problems and suggesting solutions" (p. 182). The aim of my thesis differs from this slightly, in that I am not analyzing the social problem of teacher burnout. However, the aim of my thesis is to analyze the subjective understanding of how hope inspires the practice of teachers with intent to suggest solutions to the social problem of teacher burnout. A specific strand of critical realism, called transcendental realism, looks at phenomena that exist that are not physical realities, such as hope, and recognizes that these realities are also couched in an individual's subjective understanding and experiences (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 4). The previous chapter established hope as a phenomenon that exists within the human experience, the journey of the *viator* into the not yet being. As such, I decided to ask teachers directly, through semi-structured interviews, about their hopeful experiences in their professional journeys and use their words as my data. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that the

interpretation and process of words as data is part of the nature of qualitative data, supporting a qualitative approach to my research (p. 9). Additionally, the gap in research on the topic of applied hope to the practice of teaching provides further justification to approaching this research in a qualitative way, as this research is exploratory in nature (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10).

When considering the method with which to analyze my data, qualitative research allows for a broad range of data collection and analysis techniques to be used (Guest et al., 2014, p. 5). Of the vast options available, I decided to choose a semi-structured interview design to collect the data and will outline the reasons for this in the following section. Thematic analysis, as developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was decided upon as the method for analyzing the data collected. One of the advantages of thematic analysis is its flexibility and how it can be used in a variety of theoretical frameworks either to reflect reality or to unravel it (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81). A number of studies have used a critical realist paradigm with thematic analysis, such as Adams et al. (2013), Bonnington and Rose (2014), Emson (2016), and Ferndale et al. (2017).

3.2 Semi-Structured Interview Design

Seidman (2006) states that the stories of individuals allow us to deeply comprehend complex social and educational issues (p. 7). This led me to consider interviews as a possible method of data collection to address the complex topic of hope as an educational issue. Upon further reading, Denscombe (2003) suggests social researchers ask two questions to determine if interviews are appropriate for a given research project. The first one is to reflect on the need for detailed information, the second asking researchers to consider if a small sample size is sufficient to provide enough information (p. 164). Since hope is a broad topic, the necessity to have individuals discuss deeply and explore the context within which they understand and experience hope is integral to providing a proficient answer to the research question proposed. Denscombe supports this suggesting that data based on emotions, experiences, and feelings, are well suited for interview methods (p. 165). A semi-structured interview was decided upon as the method for data collection. Another important component when considering interviews as a viable research option is the pragmatic concerns of accessibility to participants and the costs associated (Denscombe, 2003, p. 165). Given my experience in the Edmonton Public School board (EPSB) and my residence in Edmonton, both of these concerns were easily mitigated.

Using a semi-structured interview was decided upon to provide scaffolding for myself in the interview process, as this was a new experience for me. The semi-structured approach allowed me to have a prepared set of questions and prompts to invite participants into a discussion on the topic of hope and professional practice. Approaching interviews with a semi-structured mindset allowed myself to be prepared going into the interaction while appreciating the space for participants to speak broadly, explore the topic, and develop their ideas (Denscombe, 2003, p. 167). A checklist created by Denscombe was used to remain diligent in the use of interviews in collecting and analyzing data to answer my research question (p. 191).

Taking heed to the importance of thorough preparation for an interview as cautioned by Denscombe (2003), much thoughtfulness went into developing the interview questionnaire. Particularly, the use of the word "hope" was designed to be present as a noun, a verb, and an adjective in the various interview questions and prompts. For example, "Can you describe people, places, and things in your life that are hopeful?" uses hope as an adjective. Another question, "What do you hope for as a teacher?" implements the word hope as a verb. An example of hope as a noun is in the question "Where does hope reside in your work?" Dr. Denise Larsen, a psychologist and hope researcher at the University of Alberta, suggested this intentional design choice during a conversation with me where she shared that through her research she has found that when hope is discussed exclusively as a verb it often leads to more goal-oriented responses as described by Snyder's hope theory (personal communication, September 27, 2017). As this thesis investigates hope in a broader sense than simply an orientation toward achievement of goals, it was important to vary the word usage to broaden exploration of the topic.

The interview questions were designed as three sections. The first section of questions addressed hope in the context of the participant's life, inquiring into the past and the present, as well as how they experienced hope in their own education. This was done to explore the context of what experiences contributed to how participants constructed their understanding of hope. These questions also helped participants to explore the various facets of life they identify as being hopeful and the many ways they experience hope (or hopelessness). A key interview design point was placing the question "*How would you define hope?"* as the final question of this first section of questions. This was done to give participants the opportunity to explore their understanding

and experience with hope before considering an articulate definition, as a definition given after this preliminary discussion would be more robust. The second section of interview questions focused on the way hope is experienced in teaching practice. As this section addresses the primary purpose of the research question, more time was taken to explore different concepts, actions and experiences. The final section of the interview was planned as a time for closure and for participants to draw connections between how they defined hope in the first part of the interview and how they saw hope as being a part of their practice.

The interview questionnaire was piloted in November of 2017 over an online phone call with a former colleague. After the interview my colleague provided feedback and suggested I leave space in my interview to discuss feelings of hopelessness. I added in a prompt to my interview to include this and used the revised interview questionnaire for subsequent interviews. The final list of interview questions is presented in Appendix A. The information collected from the rest of the pilot interview was considered to contain helpful content for the research question and once EPSB authorized approval, this participant was given a consent form to sign and acknowledged permission for the content to be used in analysis.

3.3 Data Collection

At the time of each interview the information page and consent form were read through with the participant. The teachers were reminded that they could withdraw at any point and assured that their anonymity would be a top priority. Participants were then given an opportunity to ask any questions they had. Each participant decided on a pseudonym of which they would be referred to from that point on. These pseudonyms are used in the transcripts and are the only way participants will be referred to. It was decided to have participants select a name as a pseudonym for the interview in an effort maintain the human connection when reporting the data, instead of referring only to “participant” or a number. Once the consent form was signed the audio recording started and the interview began.

Participants often requested additional prompts or guiding to explicitly discuss hope, which my interview questionnaire allowed for. Some participants had to overcome initial inhibitions caused by their hesitations to provide the “right” answers to the questions. To assist in easing their “right answer” anxieties I reminded them that there are no right answers and that I was interested in

understanding their personal experiences and understandings of hope in their life and practice. It was also helpful to encourage them that the word "hope" did not need to be in their response but to share whatever came to mind when prompted with the questions. Despite some reserved interview beginnings, once participants became more confident and began talking and sharing, we were able to engage in a more open-ended manner.

After each interview was completed I transcribed the audio recording. Pauses, laughter, and details regarding emotional responses were included in the transcriptions. All transcriptions were checked against the original audio recording for accuracy, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 96). Additionally, they were checked for any revealing details to be edited out to assure participant anonymity. I followed Denscombe's (2003) recommendations, sending transcripts to participants as an opportunity for them to review and clarify, revise, elaborate or omit any responses to further ensure the accuracy of the data (p. 186). No revisions, elaborations, or omissions were suggested by any of the participants.

3.4 Research Participants

Opportunistic (or convenience) sampling was used and participants meeting the criteria of the study (elementary teachers) were selected on a volunteer basis (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004, p. 993). An information page introducing the project was forwarded to individuals in leadership positions that I knew within the school district with a request that they would share the letter with their staff. Through this method I received contact from four participants. Additionally, I posted in the Edmonton Teachers Buy and Sell Facebook page that I was seeking participants for my study and received contacts for three participants. The final four participants were colleagues that I have worked with in some capacity in my career as a teacher and who expressed an interest to participate when I discussed my thesis project with them. The total of 11 participants is sufficient for providing data, as critical realism focuses more on an in depth analysis of a phenomenon within a data set which allows for flexibility in participant numbers (Easton, 2010, p. 119). Miles and Huberman (1994) discuss the importance of bounding the sampling in ways that provide enough insight, while also recognizing research limitations (p. 27). As a singular researcher, a large sample size would demand resources that exceed these limitations and would not produce adequate results. Furthermore, Rubin and Rubin (2012) assert that with qualitative interviewing a researcher does not require a vast number of participants so long as the participants included

represent diverse points of view (p. 5). The teachers included in this study have diverse experiences ranging from 2-30 years in the profession, varying teaching contexts such as music and special needs, representation of grades instructed from kindergarten through to grade six, and from various communities within Edmonton. Miles and Huberman (1994) also encourage researchers to consider data as being well represented if tested against triangulation where data is confirmed by at least three different sources (p. 267). In this thesis, triangulation was evaluated by ensuring findings were represented in at least three different interviews. Interviews were conducted between February and April of 2018, with the exception of the pilot in November 2017.

I asked participants to select an interview location so that it would be a place they were comfortable in and was convenient for them. Six of the interviews were completed in coffee shops. Four interviews were conducted in the classrooms of the participant, and the pilot interview was conducted over the phone. Prior to the interviews a detailed information page was sent to each participant with the consent form for them to review and prepare questions if they wanted.

I will provide a brief introduction to the participants, referring to their self-selected pseudonym. Charlotte has been teaching for approximately 15 years. She is a music specialist and teaches students between kindergarten and grade six. Clementine has been teaching for approximately 5 years. She teaches grade one, but also has experience teaching grade three and kindergarten. Gerard has been teaching for approximately 9 years and teaches grade six. Harry has been teaching for approximately 15 years and teaches in a behavioral special needs class of nine students in grades four, five, and six. Holly has been teaching for two years and teaches grade five. James has been teaching for approximately 7 years. He teaches grade two and has a background in special needs. Jennifer has been teaching for approximately 6 years and teaches grade six. Kiera has been teaching for 7 years and teaches grade one. Kris has taught for more than 30 years and has recently retired but is returning to work for EPSB as a substitute teacher. She has a background in special needs, but primarily taught grade three for most of her career. Louise has been teaching for 10 years. She teaches grade four and has experience teaching grades three, five, and six as well. Sheila has been teaching for approximately 12 years. She teaches

grade six and has experience teaching grade five as well. The participants I was already familiar with were Charlotte, Clementine, Louise and Gerard.

All participants taught for EPSB. During the time of the interviews there were 213 schools with slightly more than 100 000 students enrolled (EPSB, 2018). This location was selected due to the familiarity I had with district policy, as well as because of the pre-existing contacts I had that could support me in my research initiatives. Edmonton is the capital city of the province of Alberta in Canada. According to the 2016 census data, there was a population of 932 546, where approximately 30% of people residing in Edmonton speak a language other than English or French (Canada's two official languages) as their mother tongue (Statistics Canada, 2017). A child poverty rate of 17.8% was reported in 2014 (Edmonton Social Planning Council, 2017, p. 6). These findings provide a brief illustration of a few factors that demonstrate diversity that is consistent with the diverse population in Alberta and would result in a diverse population of students in Edmonton schools.

4 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns or themes and was chosen as the method of analysis of the interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Braun and Clarke (2006) have suggested thematic analysis as a foundational method for qualitative work that can provide a "rich and detailed, yet complex account of data" (p. 78). The authors outlined six phases of thematic analysis; familiarizing yourself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (p. 87). These phases guided the steps of thematic analysis for the research presented in this thesis. Braun and Clarke (2006) also provide an outline of criteria for ensuring the thematic analysis is completed with good quality, which was also consulted throughout the analysis process (p. 96). The phases of thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke are consistent with Miles and Huberman (1994) who assert that good qualitative research follows a process of data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions (p. 12).

The first step taken was a familiarization with the data. Familiarization began with transcribing each interview and checking each transcription against the audio file. Transcripts were then sent to participants for approval, and after approval was granted the documents were reviewed again with summaries written for each transcription, as suggested by Rubin and Rubin (2004, p. 6). The summaries were used as a method of data reduction, "selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10). By reducing the data into simplified summaries, they can be used to "retrieve the most meaningful material, to assemble chunks of words that go together, and to condense the bulk into readily analyzable units" (Miles & Huberman, p. 6, p. 56, 1994). The summary for each participant was organized by interview questions and written in point form. Repetitions were not included and "umms" or other pauses were taken out to focus on the main ideas in the content. Simplifying the content and focusing on main ideas fostered a clearer and more concise understanding of what was similar between participants and unique to each participant. The summary documents equated in length to approximately one fourth of the original data corpus. Below in table one I have included a section of three interview question summaries from Charlotte's transcript.

Table 1. Example of interview summaries for Charlotte

Summaries from interview with Charlotte	
Hope in childhood	It was related to events, maybe memorable things like birthdays or hoping that something positive and exciting would happen on those memorable occasions.
Experience of hope in school as child	Happy and excited to experience music not just in her home but also at school as well. And with other people (my friends)
Way you experience hope currently	• "I feel like it's more global" (than when I was a child) in terms of our society. Sometimes that's my classroom, or the entire school, or my small child. I think hope changes in whatever situation you're in and you're hopeful for different groups of people depending on what the time is. • There's that slight edge of anticipation; like waiting on bated breath for it. You're expecting something to happen, and for me it should be positive. Definitely that feeling of anticipation, that knowing that something could happen; hoping it's going to turn out the you want it to.

After the initial familiarization with the data, I moved into the second step of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, generating initial codes (p. 87). To do this I reread each summary and jotted down initial words that represented commonalities or repeated ideas between the interview summaries. From these reflections, a preliminary list of codes was created inductively. The complete list of 16 codes is included in Appendix B. The codes are written with short labels as the coding was done by hand (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 58). For each code I recorded a brief description of what the code would mean to assist in applying the codes consistently across the texts and in further reflections as I worked through the analysis process (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 63).

After the summaries were used to generate this preliminary list of codes, I went back to the original transcript documents to be coded. The transcripts were physically coded using a pencil on a printed transcript of the interview and each line was read in an effort to ensure a "thorough, inclusive, and comprehensive" coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 96). The length of a coded section varied in an effort to preserve the integrity of what was meant by the words spoken (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). Some segments of data were given more than one code. Below is a section from the interview transcription of my conversation with Charlotte. The question

posed was regarding how her definition of hope applied to her work. This section includes her entire response to the question and is colour coded to show the segments included in each code. The bottom section has three codes attributed to it as she refers to each idea. Multi-coding has been supported by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 65) in the use of exploratory research, as this thesis is.

GOAL
CONTENT CONNECTION
PERSONAL CONNECTION
OPPORTUNITY
SUCCESS

I think for me, it would be situational depending on the group of kids I would be talking to, I guess ultimately for everybody, my hope is that, um, they leave with an appreciation for music, that's my ultimate hope. But for like, um, kids going to junior high, that hope would change that I hope that maybe they're inspired by what they did in these last six years to continue furthering this. If they don't, that's ok too. Um, and then I think with the other groups of kids, it just would be, um… I'd be hopeful for positive interactions, experiences just with doing, trying... feeling successful…

As the coding was completed by hand using printed paper copies of the transcripts, I followed along on digital copies of the documents. Each coded segment was copied and pasted into individual code specific documents. These code specific documents were formatted in tables and organized in sections for each participant. This was done as a digital "cutting up" of the document to put meaningful pieces together. Miles and Huberman suggest this to help a researcher see distinctions between categories and gain an idea of frequency of ideas (1994, p. 58). Below is table two that shows an example of the code Community.

Table 2. Example from a code specific document for the code Community

***Community* code specific document**	
CHARLOTTE	"one of the reasons we have drum circles is to feel camaraderie, to build the community, to feel unified and stuff, and mostly all our staff, our teachers, our EA's [*researcher note: educational assistants*] and we all sat in this big circle, and they drummed together and I videoed and watched, and you could feel that action between people, and I don't think they realized that until they experienced it, because it's so like, palpable in that moment." p. 14
CLEMENTINE	"over the past 6 months I've had a lot of changes in my life. But there was a… an amazing community of support around me, so from family and friends and my colleagues." p. 1 " their ability at school or their success at school is very much mixed in with who they were surrounding themselves with." p. 4
GERRARD	"this isn't necessarily attesting to things that only I have been responsible for because I know that a lot of those really transformative lessons in kids aren't just seeded by one person, it's a collective effort." p.8

Each code specific document was printed and reviewed to appraise for similarities and differences of participant responses. The review of code specific documents also helped to identify connections between codes as the process transitioned into Braun and Clarke's (2006) third phase of analysis, searching for themes. From a thematic analysis perspective I recognize that my role as researcher is active and that my involvement with the data and analysis determines themes, rather than claim that the themes simply "emerged." This is consistent with Braun and Clarke's (2006) criteria for quality thematic analysis (p. 96). After rereading the code specific documents I wrote summaries for each of them to understand the essence of each code. In table three below the summary statements associated with each code are shown.

Table 3. Essence of each code from code specific documents

Code	Summary statements
CONTENT CONNECTION	• An important word that emerges with curriculum or content connection is engagement or enthusiasm • Curricular content was viewed as a conduit for building relationships with students
PERSONAL CONNECTION	• Personal connections are key to meaningful work with students • Personal connections important for personal hope of teachers
COMMUNITY	• Community provides support through difficult times or feeling despair • A significant part of teaching is fostering community, both in the present within school as well as future citizens of society
CONFIDENCE	A personal assurance of one's abilities and skills that motivates them to pursue a path towards success
CONTROL	Related to autonomy; when there is a lack of control individuals feel hopeless, but realizing one's control over a situation can motivate action to change one's circumstances, fostering hopefulness
GOAL	An aim decided upon to work towards; establishes a specific direction within which one wants to grow
GROWTH	• A maturation of characteristics or qualities in an individual that can be fostered through experiences, whether they are educationally designed or organically occur in life. • An adaptation from failed attempts that result in learning something new
INDEPEN-DENCE	Fostering independence helps students take risks and experience success.
INSECURITY	Feeling of not being "good enough" or capable
LIMIT	Prevention of accessing success, often when demands exceed resources available
OPPORTUNITY	Space made available to grow, learn, or demonstrate abilities.
PARTNERSHIP	Working collaboratively to foster success.
REFLECTION	• Reflection mentioned as key for growth. • Reflecting on hope in practice was new experience.
RISK	Trying something new; willing to acknowledge that it could work out or it could not.
SAFETY	Trusting relationships that foster growth and help individuals to take risks.
SUCCESS	Attainment of a goal or achievement in a task.

To continue with phase three, searching for themes, the descriptions of the code essences were used to create a thematic map to see how the codes are related to one another. Themes were inductively determined, decided upon from the content of the data examined (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). Below in Figure 1 the thematic map is shown. In this thematic map, codes (in blue) have been categorized into thematic groups, with lines to draw connections between concepts. The headings of the themes (in green) were determined by reviewing research reflective notes of the impressions from transcript reviews. These headings are temporary and were used as a way to categorize the codes. Later, in stage five, defining and naming themes, more specific final theme names were determined and are used in the rest of the thesis report (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.87). While these temporary headings match the headings in the theoretical framework, they were not determined deductively from the theoretical framework. The final draft of the theoretical framework was written in stage six of the thematic analysis, producing the final report, and it was determined that the theoretical content could be organized in a way to reflect the analysis findings.

Figure 1. Thematic map of codes

While Growth is a code, it is also a large enough concept within which the codes Success, Independence, Confidence, and Reflection fit into. For example, the connection between codes can be seen when an individual experiences Success, they grow in Confidence. Therefore, an expression of Insecurity that matures into Confidence through experience is evidence of Growth.

After the search for themes, phase 4 of Braun and Clarke's (2006) model is reviewing themes. They suggest that through the review of themes, researchers check that the themes are "internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive" (p. 96). Maguire and Delahunt (2017) recommend researchers consider if the themes make sense, if the themes match the data set, and if there are

themes within the themes (p. 3358). In addition to this, I considered how the themes connected with the original research question, "How does hope inspire the professional practice of elementary teachers?". I returned to the transcripts to ensure that the themes were consistent with the original data set and to check if the themes fit across many interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 96; Denscombe, 2003, p. 187; Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11). As suggested by Maguire and Delahunt (2017) I extracted excerpts from the interviews that could be considered a depiction of each group of codes and copied them again into documents with theme headings that matched the thematic map (p. 3358). Through an evaluation of these excerpts and the coding I was able to confirm that the three theme groups are congruent with both the data and the intent of this thesis.

Phase five of Braun and Clarke's (2006) model is to define and name the themes, which had been named temporarily earlier (Relationships, Growth and Action). In this phase researchers refine the themes to describe the essence of what each theme is about (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). Themes are described, subthemes are explained, and connections between themes are outlined (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 33511). The final themes are titled *Hope for Connection, Hope for Growth*, and *Hope for Engagement*. By adding, "hope for" in front of each grouping, this communicates what hopes inspire teachers in their practice. In the first thematic group, initially titled "Relationships", two subthemes were established; *Interpersonal Connections* and *Collective Connections*, and the overall theme name given is *Hope for Connection*. The two subthemes were determined from codes Personal Connection and Community, respectively. While both were described as serving a similar purpose, to assist an individual in overcoming despair and personal Limits, Personal Connection has a distinct role in comparison with Community. Personal relationships provide more intimate connection and foster feelings of Safety within a person. This will be discussed in further depth in the findings section. The reason for changing the title from Relationships to Connection is that Relationships did not adequately convey both Personal Connection and Community connectedness. A person has connections to many others in a Community, but may not have relationships with them. The behavior of one may impact another without a direct relationship. Instead, it is commonality, such as geographic location or interest that connects them in a general sense. Comparatively, personal relationships are an intimate connection. Connection is key to both, but relationship is less so.

Another change that was made was to the temporary heading "Action." The final theme name given is *Hope for Engagement* because after reviewing the data set, engagement was the word used by teachers in their interviews to articulate the hope they had for their students. For teachers, engagement showed an active involvement from students in their learning and development. *Hope for Growth* was kept the same. The final organization of the three themes is shown below in Figure 2 and will be presented in the next section.

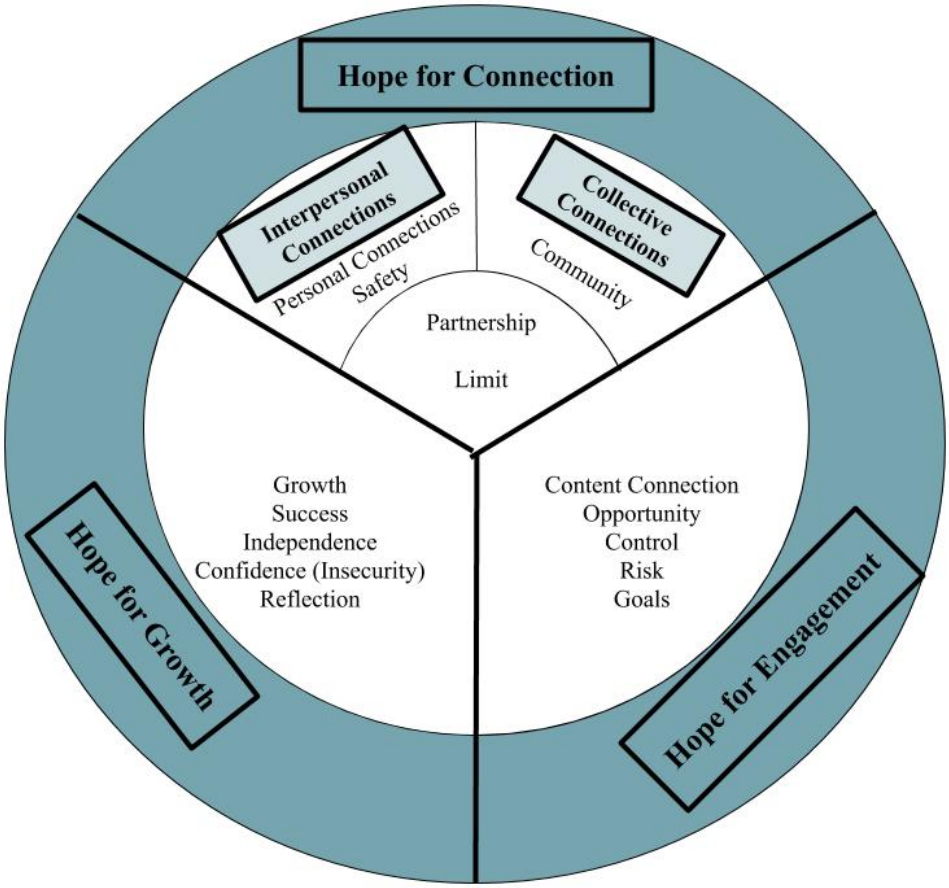

Figure 2. Final themes organized with codes

Hope for Connection was established from codes Personal Connections, Safety, Community, Partnership, and Limit. The subthemes, *Interpersonal Connections* and *Collective Connections* were established from the codes Personal Connections and Community, as they were deemed distinctively different from one another. However, both were described as providing support through Partnership to overcome Limits. *Hope for Growth* includes codes Growth, Success, Independence, Confidence, Insecurity, and Reflection. The final theme, *Hope for Engagement*, was established through the grouping of codes Content Connection, Opportunity, Control, Risk

and Goals. While there are three pronounced themes, the data also shows that the themes are intertwined, similar to three strands of a braid – each distinct, but wrapping together to create one piece – hope.

Phase six of the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87) producing the report, was done in conjunction with the completion of each step of analysis already discussed. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that the process of data analysis is interwoven throughout the entire research process (p. 11). Braun and Clarke (2006) state that the writing portion of thematic analysis happens right from the beginning in phase one, and the final report is built along the way (p. 86). For example, early drafts of the theoretical framework focused on hope in psychology, philosophy, and pedagogy. After determining the themes from the data set, I returned to the theoretical framework to refine the content presented and specifically address hope in self-actualization, relationships, and action. Phase six was completed through the researcher journal and memos kept, as well as the many drafts of this thesis. Each prior draft is saved and is a trail of thinking to show the development of ideas through the analysis process. As I wrote, areas requiring more clarity became evident. Writing the final report allowed me to organize my thoughts before engaging in each next step of analysis. With consideration to the qualities of good thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), each step is detailed and examples are provided for the reader to evaluate the connection between what was claimed to be done and what was done (p. 96).

The three themes are described in the following chapter with excerpts from the data set to provide evidence of the themes present in the interviews. Excerpts were chosen to represent responses from the range of participants to show consistency across interviews and that the data matches the analytic claims (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 96).

5 Findings

This chapter will elaborate further on the themes determined through the thematic analysis and use segments from the data set to provide evidence and justification for how the themes were determined. The three themes will be described and offer extracts from participant responses that show how these themes were determined from the data. Within each section, details that show how the insights shared by participants inspired the way they fulfilled professional responsibilities will be included. To conclude this chapter a section is presented that shows how *Hope for Connection, Hope for Growth* and *Hope for Engagement* intertwine together through a story shared by a participant.

5.1 Hope for Connection

Hope for Connection resulted in grouping codes that were thematically similar. The resulting group included the codes Personal Connections, Safety, Community, Partnership and Limits. Within the theme *Hope for Connection* two subthemes, *Interpersonal Connections* and *Collective Connections,* were determined. The decision was made to discuss two subthemes because the two kinds of connections are distinct from one another. The subtheme *Interpersonal Connections* is based on the code Personal Connections, which was determined from extracts that described a personal relationship between two people and was often characterized as offering Safety. Participants shared their experiences in these Personal Connections as both students and teachers. *Collective Connections* differed because they reflect the code Community and apply in a broader sense to people one may not know personally or intimately. Community is the interconnectedness of different relationships, both direct and indirect, and leads to a consideration of collective responsibility. Partnerships within a context of Personal Connections and in Community connections were discussed as a way to overcome personal Limits and restore hope after discouraging experiences.

5.1.1 Interpersonal Connections

The subtheme *Interpersonal Connections* was determined from participant emphasis on Personal Connections as an important component that fostered hope for participants when they were

students. As such, many of them discussed the priority they placed on fostering Personal Connections with their students and how this impacted decisions in their professional practice.

In Clementine's interview the connection between her experience as a child and how she engaged in her teaching practice was very clear. I asked her how she experienced hope in her childhood and she expressed how it was interesting to reflect back because hope was not a word she imagined she would have used as a child. She recalled a difficult childhood where her sister was frequently ill, as well as incidences of sexual abuse within her family. Due to this, she described how she imagines she experienced hope in her childhood through the important Personal Connections that allowed her to feel Safe.

> *One of my neighbors was one of my elementary teachers, so I often felt safe with that. And my favourite teacher, ever, was my grade one teacher and she was my neighbor. And there was a safety there. I always knew my teachers cared about me.* (...) *I was probably the most content when I was with my brother and my dad. They're very clear thinkers, they express themselves very clearly, they're both responsible. I always felt safe with them. So I think, like I didn't feel safe at an early age, and I think, so hope is like a little muddled for me I think, as a child. But then there were people in my life who I felt safe enough with that I felt like I could keep going. - Clementine* Coded: Personal Connection; Safety

In this extract it is clear that Clementine experienced a connection between close personal relationships and a feeling of Safety. In her final statement, a connection between Safe relationships and hope becomes clear; having people in her life to make her feel Safe allowed her to persevere through the challenges she faced. Later in the interview when we were discussing her work in the classroom this language and goal came through again:

> *I do try to make sure the children know that they're safe with me. And I think for how they know they're safe with me is because I'm consistent. Whether or not being in the rules I set or my expectations or the way I speak to them. Or actually letting them know that they can, like that they're safe to experience their emotions as well, is important. - Clementine* Coded: Safety

Here it is evident that what Clementine identified as helping her to feel hopeful as a child has become a part of her professional practice, as she intentionally provides a Safe space in her relationships with her students. Jennifer also shared the significance of Personal Connections and how the support of important relationships in her childhood helped her to hopefully face difficulty. I asked her to describe how hope was present in her elementary schooling and she shared this:

> *It was always present. I never felt like anything I wanted to do or try, that I struggled with was squashed or bad, or looked down upon. I always felt very hopeful and very supported*

> *by the teachers that I had in school, and from the family that I had as well. – Jennifer* Coded: Personal Connection; Safety

This extract demonstrates that the Personal Connections Jennifer had were important for supporting her as she engaged in her aspirations. This segment was also coded Safety because though it is not explicitly stated, she describes feeling free to express herself and that her close relationships would not harm her by rejecting her ideas. It is the freedom from harm that alludes to a Safe relationship. In further discussion, Jennifer draws the connection between being free and feeling Safe when she describes where she sees hope in her classroom:

> *If you were to spend a day in here you would see that there's a deep deep deep level of respect and understanding between the students and themselves, between the students and me and me and the students. It's a safe... a safe place, a safe culture to be in, where students aren't afraid to speak up or answer a question or be wrong, and take that chance or that risk. – Jennifer* Coded: Personal Connection; Safety

In this quote Jennifer describes the classroom culture of connection and Safety she has fostered, and how this culture is important for student involvement. The segments from both Clementine's and Jennifer's interviews provide a glimpse of how Personal Connections helped them experience hope in their schooling. Additionally, they provide clear evidence of how the impact of these Personal Connections from their childhood play a role in the way they conduct their professional practice in a hopeful way with students in the present.

Developing Partnerships to help overcome challenges was another way teachers discussed the importance of Personal Connections for encountering hope. An example of this was when James described a situation of experiencing difficulty with developing successful accommodations to support a learner in his class. The student struggled to focus in class and James had provided a variety of accommodations that had started to become what he described as "counterproductive." He shared:

> *I was starting to feel a little bit of hopelessness (...) it's a loss of hope because what you were doing was working and then it changed and it's no longer working (...) but again, I'm hopeful that we're going to put a plan in place and it will work. So I guess that's how you feel hope. Today I left, I phoned his mom after school and we had a conversation, she's going to meet with me tomorrow and we're going to come up with a new plan - James* Coded: Limit; Personal Connection; Partnership

In this quote we see the Limit James is experiencing - a plan he put in place to support a student had stopped being effective, which resulted in James experiencing hopelessness. As a strategy for overcoming this Limit, to think of new ideas or ways to support his student, he reached out to his

Personal Connection with the student's mother to work as partners to come up with fresh ideas and establish new strategies to support the student. This relationship James' shared with the mother has restored his hopefulness that together they will be able to come up with a new and better plan. Partnering with others to overcome Limits was also described in a Community context as well and will be discussed later in the following subsection.

5.1.2 Collective Connections

Collective Connections through Community were deemed hopeful because they provided participants with a reminder that they were not alone in their struggles. For example, when discussing hopeful moments in her life, Louise emphasized how important Community had been for her growing up, especially when coping with tragedy:

> *I've had a lot of loss in my life, so when someone died, it was always people coming together and laughing and helping and sharing together, when my dad died, probably one of the darkest periods or moments, you weren't alone in that grief, people came together. – Louise* Coded: Community

In this excerpt Louise describes the interconnectedness of many relationships coming together in a shared experience. While discussing hopeful moments, she highlights that not being alone in hardships creates a sense of Community. Later in the interview when describing hopeful practices, Louise shared how she integrates Community in her classroom:

> *It's a community and we all have to do our job and pull together, so I try and build as much accountability in it as I can, they all have jobs … They work in pods or pod groups where they're accountable to each other, so they have to help each other get ready. – Louise* Coded: Community

While Louise does not directly talk about this strategy as a method for helping students to overcome struggles, it shows her beginning to lay the groundwork of understanding how inter-dependability exists within a Community.

Other participants also described the importance of support from Community on personal hopefulness. Being a part of the school Community helped them to overcome the challenges of teaching and to see past feelings of despair. I asked Gerard how he experienced hope with his colleagues and he shared this:

> *Honestly, sometimes that manifests as reaching the end of the year, understanding, despairingly, that I haven't made as big of a dent in this kid as I'd hoped, but being able to look towards the group of teachers that they're about to encounter and finding, or at least anticipating, that an opportunity for them to work with this teacher that I know has these traits, are going to make a difference, or that understanding that the common goal*

> *that we have to see kids encounter success is going to continue to pay off. I know that it's helpful to be part of a staff who has a common vision and a common direction.* (…) *I know that a lot of those really transformative lessons in kids aren't just seeded by one person, it's a collective effort. – Gerard* Coded: Community; Limit; Partnership

In this quote Gerard expresses feelings resembling hopelessness when he recognizes that he had a Limited impact on certain students within a school year. However, he shares that his hopelessness is restored as he reminds himself of the Community of colleagues he works with who will be able to support those students in the future. Gerard's reference to the "collective effort" reflects a Partnership between himself and his colleagues towards a common goal of student success and transformative change. A similar thought was shared by Clementine when she discussed how she overcomes barriers that prevent her from feeling hopeful in her work and said this:

> *I stay at my school and I don't want to ever teach at another school [laughs]. (…) I don't want to go to another school because my co-workers, I just feel like we're all on the same page. We think every child is capable coming through our doors. We have such extensive layers of support at our school for community beyond the school, for social, for parenting. These layers of support are endless. – Clementine* Coded: Community; Limit; Partnership

She also refers to a common vision when she states that she feels like all her co-workers are "on the same page" and believe every student they teach is capable. Additionally, she broadens the concept of Community beyond students and colleagues by including support for families. Not only is she provided with support from colleagues in overcoming personal Limits or feelings of hopelessness, her school Community helps families to overcome the Limits they experience through Partnerships within the school to provide social support.

Alternatively, Louise highlights that when a sense of Community feels weak, this can be an obstacle to hope. In the following statement she mentions "the same PC answers" which is in reference to the Progressive Conservative government party that led the provincial legislature from 1971 – 2015.

> *I guess anytime you deal with admin or deal with policy makers they are much slower, they are working on the politics side (…). They're working on the concerns of the optics, or the funding, you know public funding and the way things always have been (…) So it can kind of halt hope in those circumstances, because you're sort of always met with the same PC answers of budget, (…) a lot of that is to keep the work at arm's length. – Louise* Coded: Limit; Partnership

Here she alludes to a concern where progress seems slow and hindered due to reasons of Limited finance, decided upon by individuals that keep themselves distanced from the direct work that is

being done in schools, rather than engaging in Partnership with the Communities impacted by these decisions.

Teachers expressed that relationships and Connections to others had significant impacts on the hopefulness they experienced. It was very important for them to foster relationships with their students and their colleagues in order to overcome obstacles together. Through both *Interpersonal Connections* and *Collective Connections*, teachers were able to engage in Partnerships and build Community that allowed them to overcome Limits.

5.2 Hope for Growth

The theme *Hope for Growth* was established because the code Growth (defined as a demonstration of maturity) encapsulated many of the other codes present in the analysis, Success, Independence, Confidence, Insecurity, and Reflection. Success was often explicitly stated as a hope teachers had for their students, for example "Sometimes [hope is] just in little successes with a student. Like seeing them make a right choice or seeing growth" (Clementine, coded Success; Growth) or Gerard describing his motivation for becoming a teacher, "it was largely motivated by a desire to help students become successful. Particularly successful in their adult lives" (coded Success). Experiencing Success can be a part of Growth, however not all Growth involves an element of Success, which is important to distinguish. For example, Kiera discussed a student in her grade 1 class whose mother had recently passed away.

> *My little boy who's struggling with mum that passed away, we do hope and dream that every day is a little bit better, but also with the realization that, as much as I hope things get better, the realization that there are going to be super hard days that aren't going to be sunshine at all. But just hopefully trying to continue moving forward. – Kiera* Coded: Growth

This passage demonstrates Growth because helping a child work through grief is a process that can have significant impacts on his development and the way he encounters grief later in his life. To experience grief with good health is not to pursue Success, as there is no end goal to attain or achieve. Rather grieving is a psychological process to work through; it is more simply growing in a human experience that has no defined endpoint. Another passage that encapsulated the concept of Growth as the maturation and development of personal characteristics is taken from a conversation I had with Harry when I asked him where I would see hope in his classroom. Harry teaches in a behavior special needs class and he shared this with me:

> *I see it because they're a lot different than they were from September, you know. Just, day by day, that might be a little tough because they're a little rough around the edges. But I can see the kindness that we're fostering, and, it's not a hundred percent of the time but I can just see the attitudes that have changed, and how trusting some of them have become of others, or even just of myself and the [Educational Assistants] here. - Harry* Coded: Growth

This extract shows Harry's emphasis on the development of characteristics such as kindness and trust as evidence of hope in his classroom, rather than achievement of outcomes.

Confidence was thematically grouped with *Hope for Growth* because it is a specific quality teachers expressed hope for. Insecurity fits within the code of Confidence because to Grow out of Insecurity leads to a development of Confidence. For example, when discussing how hope fits in her classroom, Kris shared a practice that she used to foster Confidence with her students.

> *Somebody was in my classroom and recognized one of my kids was saying "I can't do it" and she said "You need an 'I can' can" and she came back the next day with a can of soup or something, and she put "I can" on it, like a label, and that sat on that person's desk and every time they said "I can't" I said, "Look, you can, there's a can that says you can" and sometimes we used to hop it around, you know, someone's getting negative, [laughs] we'd pass it around. - Kris* Coded: Insecurity; Confidence

In this extract the "I can't" mindset of her students suggests a presence of Insecurity as defined by my coding guide - a belief that one is incapable of completing or performing a task. However, her use of the "I can" can shows an intention to develop Confidence in her students, which in itself demonstrates a *Hope for Growth*. Holly shared a personal example from her own experience as a student of feeling unsuccessful, and how it impacted the way she made decisions in her practice in the present:

> *When I was a kid, I really had a hard time finishing things on time. Turns out I had a learning disability and nobody said anything or did anything about it until I was in university. But, I did have a teacher in grade eleven that was finally like "Yeah, you need extra time on your test" after struggling forever, since I was six years old, and crying because I couldn't finish things, so that I consider a lot, I try to give kids as much time as they need. I have some kids who are so slow and take forever and I'm like "oh my god hurry up" [laughs] but then they hand their stuff in and I'm like you totally, you aced it. - Holly* Coded: Success; Insecurity; Confidence

In this extract Holly describes personal feelings of Insecurity by sharing how she cried throughout school right from six years old due to repeated unsuccessful experiences. However, once a teacher accommodated for her she was able to experience Success and continue in her education with less of that Insecurity of feeling incapable. Through this experience she now Confidently accommodates for her students in the present, helping them to experience Success

and foster their own Confidence, rather than proceed through school feeling Insecure and unable to complete their tasks. This excerpt from Holly's interview provides an example of how Success of an outcome can be linked to Growth in a greater sense. The Success experienced by Holly in one moment on one test extended beyond the outcomes her teacher tested. The Success she experienced allowed her to develop the personal characteristic of Confidence, fostering Success in many contexts for a longer duration than just that brief test.

Another characteristic teachers hoped their students would develop is a sense of Independence. In my interview with Jennifer we discussed how she saw hopelessness and hopefulness in her students. She shared this story about working with a student through the expectations of an assignment:

> *I had one boy come up to me and say, I feel like I've completely missed the entire purpose of what we're doing right now, can you come and sit with me and go through it again. So we went through the second part and the requirements, and I asked him, would you like me to work through a paragraph with you or write any of it for you? And he was like "Nope, I got it." [laughs] It's like ok, let me know if you need me again. (...) It was a huge moment too, because I'd been working with him for six months on advocating for himself and what he needs. - Jennifer* Coded: Independence; Confidence; Growth

In this quote Jennifer demonstrates her excitement in her student achieving Independence in two regards. The first being when the student demonstrated a Confidence that he did not require her help further, the second in that he took the initiative to approach Jennifer and request support in ensuring he was completing the requirements of the assignment properly. This quote also corresponds with Growth as Jennifer shared that she had been working on this trait with him for six months and then saw evidence of him starting to demonstrate Independence without her support or prompting. Kiera also expressed this hope for Independence when she shared some of the choices she made in her practice:

> *I've noticed that the kids are more successful when they know what's coming and when they can take charge of their learning. So the schedule does not change from day to day. There's things we normally do, because I feel like they can gain some independence knowing exactly what's coming next and it's not me prompting all the time. (...) I feel like they can do more because they're more confident in their classroom right now. (...) something as simple as organizing our classroom and we've had parents saying, they come home and next thing they know their room's impeccable. Because, things are transferring home. - Kiera* Coded: Success; Independence; Confidence

In her quote Kiera shows that the daily structural decisions she makes regarding the progression of a weekly schedule, as well as the physical organization of her class is designed in a way to foster Independence for her students. Kiera's quote also demonstrates how Success can be an

indicator for Growth, as her students experience increased Success due to the development of their Confidence and ability to engage in their learning with increased Independence. Additionally, the Growth of these skills is especially evident because of the reports from parents that indicate their transference to the home environment.

Another key aspect of Growth was Reflection. For example, when discussing his assessment practices, James shared how he thought it was hopeful when focused on Growth and Reflection. This is evident in the following extract from our interview:

> *I hear lots of teachers talk about how kids have test anxiety, and I feel like I don't really see that in my students, 'cause I feel like, I think we don't make a big deal out of an assessment. It's actually there to inform me and inform them* [the students]*, I give them lots of opportunities to self-reflect, and identify areas for growth. And I feel that often when I give an assessment task, they're very excited to do it. And they want to know how they did, and they look forward to having the opportunity to look back on what they did and identify what they were doing well and what they need to improve on. – James*
> Coded: Reflection, Growth

In this quote James demonstrates that he uses assessment to teach students the importance of Reflection and how it can guide Growth by determining next steps. This promotes characteristics and qualities that develop skills and can be applied in a variety of contexts. Clementine also discussed Reflection in connection to Growth. When I asked her how hope inspires her daily decisions in her practice she shared this:

> *Sometimes you have to make those intuitive decisions of "this isn't working anymore" and then change it and find something that is working, or sometimes it'll be in my planning, you've actually learned your students ability and you've learned how you have to change it. Or whether or not it be, the kids have been on the carpet for a really long time and I've gotta get them moving. They're like little decisions about what's working and what's not working for them. And for me. [laughs] Sometimes I'll do something and I'm like mm, that just didn't go well for me. I think you have to be reflective for it. - Clementine* Coded: Reflection; Success; Growth

While James demonstrates how fostering Reflection in his students contributes to their Growth, Clementine shows how Reflection is just as important for teachers. Reflection helps her to be a better, more responsive teacher for both her students and herself. Making choices Reflectively helps both her and her students experience Success. This is hopeful in that it helps her, and her students, to experience Success, which improves their Confidence. Her ability to Reflect also allows her to be responsive if something is not working and provides hope by considering alternative solutions that could lead to Success later.

5.3 Hope for Engagement

The final theme, *Hope for Engagement*, shows hope as action. This was present as teachers discussed students taking ownership of their learning and growth, as well as how they took steps outwards to become engaged with others. The codes that were grouped to determine the theme *Hope for Engagement* were Control, Goals, Risk, Opportunities, and Content Connection.

One aspect of *Engagement* is the realization of Control an individual has over certain events or responses in one's life. When I asked Harry his hope for his class, his perspective of personal autonomy in relation to hope was evident:

> *Give them [his students] enough of a positive influence that they realize that their situations, they probably don't feel like they have a lot of control over it, it's like, kind of empowering them to realize that they have more than they think. And that they have to realize that they do. A lot of the guys that I've worked with over the year it's pretty easy to stereotype them. Like, this guy's going to end up doing this. But if you can just kind of give them, enough to … stay out of that. That's all you can hope for, give them enough tools and literacy to be able to navigate their way through the muck they're going to have to deal with [laughs]. (...) They have to inherently know that at the end of the day, they have control over their behavior. We're here to guide them into making good decisions, but, they have to know that, we don't control their integration. - Harry* CODED: Control

This quote demonstrates the unique context within which Harry teaches and how teaching his students Control over their situation is a way hope manifests itself in his classroom. As a teacher in a behavioural special needs class his students are not yet integrated into a full inclusion classroom. Earlier in the interview he shared that his class is more of a trauma class than a behavioral special needs class due to the previous experiences of his students. When he references the typical stereotypes of students in behavioral classes these often include assumptions about students dropping out of school and becoming involved in crime. Harry's hope to teach his students that they have Control over their lives, starting with their integration into full inclusion classrooms, is the first step towards empowering students to take action over their progress and showing them that they are not destined for the stereotypes projected onto them.

Many participants also shared how they saw hope when students personally engaged in their learning and took Control over their growth. For example, when I asked Louise how she saw hope in her students she shared this:

> *Every time they say "I'm working on…" you know they actually picked that because they believe they can do it, it's something that has purpose to them and that they're ready for,*

> *that's hopeful. Anytime a kid, you see them take risks, you see them try something new, that's them displaying their little things of hope, knowing that if I try this it might be good, it might not go good, but it might be good, I might grow from it, that's hopeful. – Louise* Coded: Control; Goal; Risk

In this quote Louise demonstrates that when students engage in their learning, taking Control of their improvement by setting Goals and taking Risks, these moments demonstrate the hope students have in themselves. The hope that students display in turn inspires hope in teachers, like Louise. Charlotte also described Goal setting when we discussed student *Engagement* and how she saw students taking Control of their learning. Charlotte shared a few examples of how she saw her students set Goals:

> *I have a student in grade 2 who came up to me in September and was like, can I bring my ukulele and can you teach me how to play a song so I can practice for the talent show? And I had a student that came and said, I really love singing, and I wonder if I could maybe lead and sing O Canada at the next assembly. So I think personally, if they're invested in it, then they'll think of some goals for their own selves, that no one told them, they just have observed, what could be next and they progress that way. – Charlotte* Coded: Goal; Content Connection; Opportunity; Control

She describes students taking Control of their learning by setting personal Goals and approaching her for help in achieving those Goals. Her quote also shows the importance of students feeling Connected to the Content so that they feel invested in their learning. Furthermore, this excerpt shows the importance for teachers to provide Opportunities for students to take Risks and demonstrate their learning. Due to Charlotte's music specialty, she has the unique ability to provide various specialized Opportunities for students to engage in the specific Content she teaches. Teachers organizing events like talent shows or assemblies, as Charlotte references here are ways teachers provide students with Opportunities to invest in passions and talents beyond the classroom. Another way is through extracurricular clubs. Kiera shared a story of how she saw hope in a student who pursued running club.

> *We had a little boy who I taught in grade one who was selective mute, and was not engaged in any peers. And this year, I teach the elementary running club, and he joined running club, so I was really interested to see him there because he's not a sports guy, he's not into any of that kind of thing. And then he did not stop, was not the fastest runner but wanted to prove, I can do this. – Kiera* Coded: Goal; Risk; Opportunity; Content Connection

This excerpt from my interview with Kiera shows a student who decided to take a Risk and try something new, and set a Goal to prove that he could do it. Kiera provided the Opportunity through a club that offered students additional *Engagement* with physical education. From the stories both Charlotte and Kiera shared, they show that teachers see hope when students

autonomously decide they want to pursue an Opportunity and become connected with their learning in a new way.

Teachers also described ways they provide space for students to Connect with Content to improve student *Engagement*, and for students to get involved in areas that are interesting and meaningful for them. Participants shared how they did this through intentional planning and thoughtful choice of projects they implemented. For example, Sheila shared a project she worked on with students:

> *We came up with a project, and the Nickelback video If Everyone Cared was really big at the time, so we used that as our jumping off point. And we looked at our school and said, "K, does our school look cared for?" No, no it doesn't. So they came up with ideas, well, how can we make it look cared for? And again, they came up with ideas, and they made it look cared for, and they made these presentations, and they went around to the school to teach everyone what a cared for school looks like, and they were just so engaged, and you're just like… this is awesome. – Sheila* Coded: Content Connection; Opportunity

This extract from my interview with Sheila shows how she was intentional about providing an Opportunity for students to get involved in a place that was meaningful to them, their school. Additionally, she used popular culture to build a Content Connection and get her students engaged in their learning. This planning shows how her *Hope for Engagement* inspired the decisions she made in her practice. Jennifer shared another example of intentional use of building Content Connections with students in a way that was meaningful to them. When I asked her about hopeful moments in her work, she shared this:

> *We talk a lot about democracy, about how citizens can have a voice and can affect change, it doesn't have to be when you're 18 years old and able to vote in Alberta, so we spend so much time, not only through governments and democracy, but in how as an eleven year old, you have, and can use your voice, and that it's valued, and worthy of speaking up and saying something. (...) I've had kids put together petitions to make changes to one of our playground fields where there's absolutely nothing, that's where they're supposed to be for recess. And those conversations about how can we get this to somebody, talking about administration here, and then school boards, and how that might actually filter out. - Jennifer* Coded: Content Connection; Goal

In this section Jennifer shows that she is able to foster *Engagement* from her students by making Curricular Content interesting and personally meaningful for her students. By developing a Connection with the Content for her students, they are then able to establish their own personal Goals such as writing a petition to make changes to their school environment.

Student *Engagement* inspired hope in teachers, and teachers often made professional decisions that aimed to draw out *Engagement* from students such as showing students that they had Control over their learning, allowing space to set Goals and take Risks, and providing Opportunities both in the classroom and extracurricular activities for students to develop Connections to Content in meaningful ways. The action taken by teachers to develop these moments of *Engagement* for students, demonstrate a level of *Engagement* among the teachers, too.

5.4 A Consolidation of Themes

While all the themes are presented separately above, demonstrating the way the codes come together to create the themes, this final section shows how the three themes come together to show the multidimensional nature of hope, as discussed in the theoretical framework. Though this may seem untypical of a thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006) state that producing the report should include extracts from the data that provide an "interesting account of the story the data tell - within and across themes" (p. 93). Many of the stories participants shared about hopeful moments in their practice connected the three themes together. These were often extremely beautiful moments as the love the teachers had for their students came through in their voices. Charlotte shared one story about a project she did with students in her first year of teaching. The class she was working with was a behavior opportunities class for students with special needs. The group of students posed many challenges for Charlotte, often fighting with each other as well as her. She shared:

> *I remember thinking that I wanted to engage them in something that they would buy in, they wouldn't fight with each other, they wouldn't fight with me. And I was really into Stomp and so we decided to compose our little rhythms and have these little scenes and then (…) I videoed them in various scenes around the school. Like they were in the stairwells, they were in the gym, they were outside, so on and so forth. And so it was a lot of work, the kids worked hard, but they loved it. And then it was the end of the year and off they went. And then like, I don't know, maybe 8 years later, one day somebody came and knocked on my door. And I thought it was a dad of a kid, and I opened the door and then he was like "Do you remember me?" and I was like "umm… I'm not sure…" and then he was like "It's me, so-and-so." And it was a kid that was in that class, and he said "I'm back in town, I moved away, I wanted to come back and see my old elementary school, and I remembered that music was down here and I wanted to see if maybe you were still here, and you are still here!" So we talked a bit and then he said, "you know I want to say, I remember, when I was in grade 5 I was really bad and made poor choices and I probably made it difficult for you to do your job, but I do remember, I haven't forgotten, you gave us those sticks and we did a Stomp video and we were playing in the stairwell, I still remember that! And I'm 19!" And even now, thinking about that it makes*

> *me teary because I was like here's a kid that was in that class that was so challenging, but, all these years later he still remembers that, that's cool.* Coded: Goal; Content Connection; Success; Personal Connection

This story Charlotte shared shows *Hope for Growth* as the students completed a specific Goal successfully, *Hope for Connection* because they were able to work together and with Charlotte to complete the project, and *Hope for Engagement* evident through Charlotte's emphasis that they worked hard to complete it. The significance of this experience for the student is evident in how it had a lasting impression on him years later, and that he was intentional in reconnecting with Charlotte. Her emotion in retelling the story demonstrates how much it means to her to have had this impact on the life of a student. It is these stories and experiences teachers have that I believe help to combat the challenge of teacher burnout as discussed in the beginning of this thesis.

6 Discussion

In this section I examine how the themes and the relationships between them answer the research question. The three themes determined in the analysis of my data show a multi-dimensional understanding of hope that aligns with many aspects of the multi-dimensional theories of hope presented in section 2.4. For example, *Hope for Growth, Hope for Connection,* and *Hope for Engagement* match the affective and cognitive dimensions, affiliative dimension, and behavioral dimension of Dufault and Marocchio's model respectively (cited in O'Hara, 2013, pp. 11-16). In addition, the three themes connect with the psychological and social resources, and mastery and attachment motives presented in Scioli et al.'s (2011) network model of hope. Finally, *Hope for Growth, Hope for Connection,* and *Hope for Engagement* connects with Larsen et al.'s (2020) cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and other relationships that comprise hope in individuals.

The themes determined from the data analysis provide two answers to the research question that are discussed in this section. Additionally, this chapter considers the implications of how hope inspired practice could impact factors of burnout in teachers. From there I provide insight into additional considerations that developed from the research and how they can support action moving forward, as well as explore the limitations of the study and how they can inform future research.

6.1 Answering the Research Question

In this section I answer the research question:

How does hope inspire the professional practice of elementary teachers?

The responses collected from participants and the subsequent analysis of responses has shown that what teachers hope for inspires the specific, practical decisions made in their daily work. At a secondary level, the results of working in a hope-inspired way, as illustrated through the hopeful anecdotes participants shared, provide insight into how hopeful practices can "breathe life into" teachers to persevere through challenges. A close evaluation of the hopeful moments in teacher experiences shows how the presence of hope could potentially diminish the effect of burnout predictors outlined in Dorman's (2003) model of teacher burnout discussed in section 2.1. These considerations of how hope inspires teaching practice are discussed below in regard to

each theme independently and then in how they interact, similar to the way the themes were presented in chapter five.

The first theme *Hope for Connection* shows two distinct types of connection that are valued by teachers, *Interpersonal Connections* and *Collective Connections*. Differentiating types of connection aligns with the theory of hope and relationships discussed in section 2.4.2. For example, family and peers as external factors of hope described by Bernardo (2010) and Du and King (2013), as well as the discussion regarding how hope influences families by Yohani (2008), would fit into the category of *Interpersonal Connections*. Alternatively, hope found in cultural identity as discussed by Ani (2013) and Vacek et al. (2010), or found in social movements for collective rights, as examined by Solnit (2016), apply to *Collective Connections*. The hope teachers had for these connections motivated a variety of intentional practices that intended to set up Safe classroom environments conducive to Community and relationship building. These practices designed to cultivate connections are important for developing hopeful practice and hopeful education. As discussed in section 2.5, hopeful education is built upon mutual relationships between teachers and students and is considerate of the wellbeing of both teachers and students. It could then be considered that these hopeful practices of relationship and connection building would have positive implications on the Classroom Environment predictor in Dorman's (2003) model of teacher burnout, negatively impacting the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization factors of Maslach and Jackson's burnout theory (1981). Additionally, teachers expressed a *Hope for Connection* for themselves personally, which impacted the ways they engaged with their own personal relationships, colleagues, and school community. The investment into the connections of their own lives may have a positive effect on their rating of School Environment in Dorman's model (2003), and would decrease their feelings of Depersonalization.

The second theme, *Hope for Growth*, aligns with the concept of self-actualization as discussed in sections 2.4.1 and 2.5 of this thesis. Many of the practices teachers implemented in their profession were motivated by a desire to help students become "the best [they are] able to become" (Maslow, 1971, p. 185). One aspect of this was to help students experience Success with the authorized outcomes in the Alberta curriculum. However, teachers more frequently spoke of Growth and described it in a holistic sense that emphasized students becoming the best

they could through more human qualities, such as socially. Additionally, the desire to help students develop Confidence and Independence demonstrates not only teachers seeing the full potentialities of students, but also a hope that students would develop an appreciation of their own full potentialities for themselves. This shows an inherent respect for the child, as advocated for by Fromm (1947). Fostering this growth, and witnessing the result of it in students could improve the scores of Teacher Efficacy and Self-Esteem from Dorman's (2003) burnout model, elevating a sense of Personal Accomplishment in teachers and reducing the likelihood of teacher burnout. A specific practice teachers implemented to foster growth was to teach and encourage students to Reflect on their learning. The practice of Reflection helps develop a rich internal life, which is another essential component of self-actualization as explored in Frankl's (2008) discussion of survival in Auschwitz. Similarly to *Connections*, teachers also sought *Growth* for themselves and described the importance of personal Reflection to cultivate their own development, both personally and professionally. This shows how participants also engage in self-actualization as they developed into their own full potentialities. To engage in intentional Reflection and pursue personal Growth could have a positive effect on the predictors of Teaching Efficacy and Self-Esteem from Dorman's model (2003), thus improving feelings of Personal Accomplishment.

The final theme, *Hope for Engagement*, shows hope through action as students begin to navigate Control of their own learning. Snyder's (1994) hope theory connects clearly, as according to his theory hope is primarily attached to Goal setting. Teachers extensively discussed hope found in Goal setting as well. This makes sense as to see students set Goals for themselves, as well as determine ways of achieving these Goals, essentially shows students taking action of their "not yet being" and steering it toward a "being" that is meaningful to them. As teachers provide Opportunities for students to explore goals and pursue them, both in curricular content and through extracurricular activities, students begin to learn that they can take Control of their actions and direct progress toward a desired result. This shows students that their actions matter because they can see the direct result of their action. The awareness of how our actions contribute to a desired outcome connects with Solnit's (2016) distinction between hope and optimism because hope is the "belief that what we do matters," rather than a casual expectation that circumstances will work out in our favour (p. xiv). In addition to providing Opportunities for

Goal setting, teachers developed meaningful Connections to Curriculum as an Opportunity to show students their actions mattered in real world contexts as well. This practice reflects the hope of Freire's "problem-based education" that intends to allow students to critically discuss and reflect on the problems in their current reality as a means to encourage them to act (1993). When *Hope for Engagement* is actualized, this could positively impact the way teachers perceive Classroom and School Environment from Dorman's model (2003) of teacher burnout, leading to a decrease in Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization. Additionally, there is the potential of an increase in feelings of Teaching Efficacy and Self-Esteem, thereby improving feelings of Personal Accomplishment and decreasing the possibility for burnout.

Although each theme can be appreciated in its own distinction, the way they intertwine undoubtedly causes the progression or regression of one to impact the development of the others. For example, many of the participants acknowledged that for students to learn (*Hope for Growth*), they needed to know their teachers cared for them (*Hope for Connection*) and be interested and active in their learning (*Hope for Engagement*). Participants described *Hope for Growth* and *Hope for Engagement* as contingent upon the actions teachers take to create trusting Connections and Communities, so that students can feel Safe in taking Risks, appreciating failure, and engaging in Reflection. This aligns with Maslow's (1971) assertion that for education to foster self-actualization and develop students into their full potentialities safe, trusting and mutual relationships between teachers and students, must exist (see section 2.5). Freire (1993) also emphasized the mutual relationship between student and teacher with regard to his "problem posing education" that aims to develop strong and meaningful engagement with students through contexts that matter to students. Furthermore, *Interpersonal*, *Collective*, and Content *Connections* cause students to engage meaningfully in problems that affect not only themselves, but others as well. To become engaged and act upon the concern for *Collective Connections* is to develop personal self-actualization, as Fromm and Freire (see section 2.4.2) both express that we can only improve in becoming fully human by recognizing, respecting, and protecting the humanity of others. Not only does *Connection* impact *Growth* and *Engagement*, but also *Growth* and *Engagement* work in a partnership together where neither is as successful without the other. For example, one may consider Freire's concept of praxis discussed in section 2.4.3, where reflection and action work in conjunction with one another to transform the world into what is yet to

become. Participants spoke of this relationship between Reflection and engagement in their practice, as well. One simple demonstration of this relationship existed as one participant shared how she prompted students to think about how "I used to be a writer that … but now I'm a writer who…" to identify personal Success and reflect on *Growth*. Students then use Reflection to plan the next steps or Goals in their writing work. Though this may seem like a small example, it provides an introductory understanding of how Reflecting back can inform progress moving forward. Just as Reflection on *Growth* can be used to foster *Engagement*, *Engagement* that exists through Content Connection can motivate *Growth* as well. This was evident in the extracurricular examples described in the Findings section, such as the student who was interested in learning the ukulele, set a Goal to perform at the talent show, and used this to motivate their *Growth*. The back and forth of *Engagement* and *Growth* links with Maslow's (1971) thoughts that for education to help students self-actualize (*Growth*) they must discover and pursue their passions and strengths (*Engagement*). Furthermore, the integration of the themes were evident most frequently when participants shared anecdotes of hopeful moments in their career, similar to Charlotte's in section 5.4. These stories often represented the "why I became a teacher" moments for participants, demonstrating a distinct inspiration that expressed a sense of purpose or meaning in their work as educators. This level of inspiration is important to acknowledge because it is reminiscent of Frankl's (2008) logotherapy that aims to provide support for clients through challenging times by developing one's sense of purpose. As such, the presence, remembrance, and celebration of these experiences could have a significant role in breathing life into teachers who are at risk for burnout.

While the interconnectedness of what teachers hope for was recognized by them and used to inform practice in many ways, it is also important to consider this interconnectedness in contemplation of how to breathe life back into teachers when they feel burnt out. Any solution developed or promoted cannot focus on any singular factor, but must consider a multidimensional approach that supports teachers and education in a holistic way.

It is clear through the analysis and examination of themes determined from the data that varying facets of hope have important roles to inspire elementary teachers in the practical decisions of their practice. The results of teachers using hopeful practice aids in preventing teacher burnout

and inspires teachers to overcome the challenges presented in their profession. This conclusion is reflected in hooks' concept of "engaged pedagogy" that affirms teacher wellbeing and student wellbeing as being connected (see section 2.5). If hope is respected and elevated in the work of the teaching profession, this could be a strategy for overcoming present concerns of teacher burnout. In the following subsection I outline unexpected considerations of how uncomfortable and unprepared teachers felt in the interviews discussing the concept of hope in their practice. This is important as it provides suggested next steps after this study.

6.2 Additional Considerations

While a number of practices outlined above show how the results could have positive implications in reducing teacher burnout, there are a number of factors from Dorman's (2003) model that are left unaddressed, such as Work Pressure, Role Conflict, and Role Overload. These elements of teacher burnout are unlikely to be solved through individual teacher hopeful practice, but should be approached through structural practices and systems built upon a foundation of hope. Participants expressed feelings of hopelessness when confronted with the limitations imposed by the bureaucracy of administration or the government. These feelings of hopelessness may suggest a lack of connection between the hopeful practices implemented by teachers individually, and the approach of larger governing bodies toward education. As such, I assert that all stakeholders should approach education in a holistic hopeful way that will benefit teachers and students.

Additionally, while the practices outlined by the teachers of this study have already shown a strong foundation for hopeful education that benefits teachers, students, families, and communities, there are some places where it is clear more support could be given to foster hope in education. For example, while teachers talked about the importance of community and collective connection, none of the teachers made a comment regarding cultural inclusion or representation as a method of building community, as suggested in Ani's (2013) research, as well as Vacek et al. (2010). The implications of this could significantly affect the success of hopeful education in Alberta for students, given the diverse social context of Alberta described in chapter two of this thesis. This could lead to negative Classroom and School Environments, increasing feelings of Depersonalization. Furthermore, teachers could develop low Teaching Efficacy and Self Esteem and experience cultural burnout as discussed by Tatar and Horenczyk (2002). As

such, it is important for teachers to be properly supported in developing professionally in this manner. Another topic that emerged in discussion with many of the teachers interviewed was inclusive education for students with special needs. Perspectives regarding inclusive education were split, with some teachers expressing inclusive education as a barrier to feeling hope, while others expressed that opposition from colleagues regarding support for inclusive education was a barrier to feeling hope. The inconsistency in responses suggests a possible inconsistency in support available to teachers with consideration to inclusive education. Without the proper support, inclusive education can lead to burnout, as examined by Talmor et al. (2005) and discussed in section 2.1.

The way perceived disconnect from governing bodies, as well as challenges in inclusive practices, were expressed as obstacles to hope provide insight into what may be contributing to the teacher burnout rates in Alberta. To address these concerns, it could be beneficial to use Freire's (1993) concept of praxis, in that reflection and action are needed to bring about changes to develop holistic practices of hope in education that acknowledge hope's multidimensionality and complexity, and in ways that support teachers.

Another unexpected consideration was that during many interviews the idea of hope was more difficult for teachers to discuss than I (or they) had anticipated. Participants often felt insecure about giving the "right" answer and were uncomfortable about using the word "hope." James described his experience in the interview as "uncomfortable" because he was not sure what he should say. As the interviews progressed, participants gradually became more at ease using the word or would resign to speaking of whatever came to mind. Despite challenging beginnings to the interviews, by the end many participants expressed that they found the opportunity to talk about hope to be meaningful. They shared that our conversation showed them that hope is something they need to spend more time explicitly thinking about. In his concluding thoughts, Gerard offered:

> *I have not had an opportunity to reflect on hope specifically in my teaching practice, so this was a very interesting conversation. I know the vocabulary that we typically assign to getting kids to, persevere or demonstrate resilience, they're all these buzzwords… I've kind of forgotten about the hope word. Very cool. - Gerard*

Kiera expressed excitement to share the questions presented in the interview with her colleague on the drive to school the following morning. The discomfort and unfamiliarity of discussing hope in practice as described by participants may have important implications in consideration of teaching practice or teaching preparation. Teachers are individuals, just as their students, that engage with hope through *Connection*, *Growth*, and *Engagement*. The responses participants shared about how they experienced hope personally helped to understand the importance of *Connections*, both in the past and in their present work conditions. Hope as *Engagement* was evident as teachers discussed how hope was actively fostered in classrooms through the daily professional decisions they made. However, the statements participants made about never having thought or discussed hope as a practice before may indicate a gap of hope through *Growth* and self-actualization. Engaged pedagogy requires teachers to "be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own wellbeing if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students." (hooks, 1994, p. 15). Student wellbeing and teacher wellbeing is connected, and so a healthy and holistic model of education does not just require teachers to establish hopeful practice for their students, but provides time for teachers to engage in intentional reflection so they can develop self-actualization and foster wellness. Perhaps it is Role Conflict and Work Overload that get in the way of teachers' abilities to engage in personal self-actualization, and would be the place to start for developing strategies that prevent teacher burnout in this regard.

The additional considerations show that moving forward stronger *Connection* needs to be established in the network that supports teachers, specifically governing bodies and how teachers are provided for successful implementation of inclusive education. Also, *Engagement* in *Growth* through valued and protected time to reflect and develop would be ways to respect the dimensions of hope in the lives of teachers in an effort to curtail teacher burnout.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

As with any research project, and especially as a beginning researcher, reflecting over the process allows me to identify areas for growth when considering future projects. The primary limitation that I often reflect on is the limited scope of this study. I realize that given resources and experience, having a realistic expectation of scope is important and so I bound my study to what was realistic within this one project. However, there are a number of future avenues of research

to consider after this project. For example, it would be interesting to expand on the participants to include other stakeholders in education such as students, administrators, families, policy makers, as well as out of school support partnerships such as non-profit organizations like Free Footie, Boys and Girls Clubs, or e4c. Furthermore, widening the scope of teacher participants selected, such as considering secondary teachers and comparing with the results from the elementary participants, more concise organization of participant responses based on years of experience, or consider the experience and practice of teachers outside of the Edmonton Public Schools district to include teachers from a variety of geographic locations or contexts. In addition to this, it would be fascinating to widen the scope of data collected from participants beyond a 45-minute interview to include other sources such as observation or repeated interview, or other approaches to the research such as grounded theory or case study. Another avenue to consider would be to interview teachers who have left the profession to understand what role hope plays in their lives. Additionally, using tools to measure burnout scores in conjunction with teacher hope could develop further insight. Ultimately, there is no limit to curiosity to guide inquiry in such a broad topic within which there is very little practical research that exists yet.

Another aspect of the research that is important to acknowledge was my limited experience with the research process. Care was taken to scrutinize each step of the research process, from evaluation of existing research and writing, to ensuring the thematic analysis was completed with due diligence. However, with my limited knowledge and experience of this endeavor, I am indebted to the guidance and feedback of my thesis supervisor, Audrey Paradis, as well as the many colleagues I sought wisdom and feedback from. Future research would benefit from deeper collaboration with a team of fellow researchers. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that for credible research it is best for researchers to check back with their team to ensure that coding and analysis is consistent among them, thus improving the quality of research. This was not possible in the present research, however I would be interested in how the results would remain consistent if scrutinized by fellow professionals.

7 Research Quality

In this section I describe the ethical considerations taken when undergoing the research presented, as well as outline an evaluation of the quality of research by discussing the trustworthiness and credibility evident in this thesis.

7.1 Ethical Considerations

The National Advisory Board on Research Ethics (TENK) guidelines for research in the humanities informed the ethical considerations of this thesis, as well as the approval criteria outlined by EPSB. TENK (2009) outlines three ethical principles that research must adhere to; 1) respecting the autonomy of research subjects, 2) avoiding harm, and 3) privacy and data protection. Respecting the autonomy of research subjects is evident when a research project uses voluntary participation, acquires informed consent, and permits participants to withdraw from the study at any point (pp. 5-7). According to TENK (2009), informed consent should include researchers contact information, the research topic, data collection method and approximate time required, the purpose for the data being collected and how it will be stored, and the voluntary nature of the project (p. 7). Adherence to these guidelines is present and can be checked in the Call for Participants and the Interview Protocol documents found in Appendix C and Appendix D. The second principle, avoiding harm, includes mental harm, social harm, and financial harm (pp. 8-9). One way to prevent harm is to treat participants respectfully, politely, and with dignity. This can be addressed similarly to respecting the autonomy and providing information regarding the study and research process ahead of time, as I did. Another important way to avoid harm during interviews is to be attentive to participants and responsive to any signs of mental distress present such as annoyance, embarrassment, or fatigue. During the interviews none of the participants exhibited these signs. Social and financial harm can be protected through enacting the third principle, privacy and data protection, so as not to jeopardize a person socially or professionally by disclosing identifiable details from the interviews. Privacy and data protection includes protecting research data and confidentiality, storing or disposing of research data, and concerns regarding research publications (p. 10). Data that contains identifiers must be carefully stored and protected. For my research, consent forms with participant identities are stored in a lockbox. The original interview recordings are stored on my phone that is only accessible when a

PIN code is entered, as well as backups of the recordings are stored on my computer which is password protected. During the interviews participants selected a pseudonym with which they were referred to as during the interview recording and this pseudonym is used to discuss participants in all other places. In the process of transcribing all other identifying details, such as schools worked at, places of residence, or names of students or colleagues were edited out. The consent form informed participants that the data would be kept for five years with the possibility of it being used for further research, and at the end of those five years the data would be destroyed.

EPSB approval pended upon a research proposal that explained how the research project would comply with Alberta legislation in the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP), as well as a statement of ethics approval from my post-secondary institute (University of Oulu). In addition, I was instructed to complete an online tutorial course on the Tri-Council Policy Statement for Ethical Content for Research Involving Humans and submit my completion certificate with my research proposal. FOIP concerns were already addressed through the adherence to the ethics principles outlined by TENK. I received a request for ethics approval from Elina Lehtomäki, member of the Values, Ideologies and Social Contexts of Education research group. Additionally, I completed the online tutorial course and obtained the completion certificate to present in my proposal. My research proposal was accepted and I was granted approval to seek participants employed with EPSB.

7.2 Trustworthiness

Nowell et al. (2017) establish a clear understanding of how to complete a thematic analysis with academic rigor. They outline ways a researcher can complete each phase of Braun and Clarke's model of thematic analysis that foster trustworthiness. Some of the recommendations made by Nowell et al. invoked support from a research team. As I am the singular researcher for this thesis, there was no team within which to seek consensus with. However, I was in frequent communication with my supervisor for debriefing. For phase one, familiarization with the data, they recommend a prolonged engagement with data and for researchers to document reflective thoughts about theoretical ideas and potential codes (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 4). In addition to this, data and research notes are to be well organized. I achieved this through the familiarization with data outlined in the thematic analysis section, as well as through my organization system to keep

transcripts ordered, specific journals with researcher notes, and a folder system to keep documents saved in. To engage in trustworthiness in phase two, generating of codes, I continued to use reflexive journaling and kept an audit of the code generating process. In phase three, searching for themes, trustworthiness is developed when the researcher uses diagrams to make sense of theme connections and detailed notes are kept to document the development of themes and concepts. This was completed through continued journaling and the annotation of documents as they were reviewed and analyzed. The thematic map developed is presented in the data analysis chapter of this thesis. In phase four, reviewing the themes, Nowell et al. (2017, p. 4) recommend that researchers return to the raw data to check for adequacy of the themes, which I completed and the process is outlined in chapter four. For phase five, naming and defining the themes, trustworthiness is established through documentation and was made evident through discussion in chapter four. The final phase, producing the report, has a number of recommendations for establishing trustworthiness such as describing the coding and analysis process with sufficient detail, providing thorough descriptions of context, and an outline of reasons for methodological and analytical choices made throughout the study (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 4). When writing this thesis I maintained these goals and the inclusion of them is evident and weaved in throughout the various chapters.

7.3 Credibility

Rubin and Rubin (2012) provide a comprehensive description to assist researchers in ensuring their research is credible, and I have used many of their recommendations in the development of this thesis. They describe one way to enhance credibility through thoughtful selection of participants by considering participants who are experienced, knowledgeable, and who represent a variety of perspectives (2012, pp. 2-4). All participants interviewed were practicing elementary teachers with a broad range of teaching experience, between 2 and 30 years. While this means they have varied levels of experience or knowledge as teachers, it helps to provide diverse perspectives. Additionally, the participants had experience in a range of teaching contexts such as special needs classrooms, curricular content specializations (music), and grades spanning from kindergarten to grade six, which also represented varying perspectives. Furthermore, participants taught in various schools around the city of Edmonton, which represents varying student populations and develops different experiences to broaden the perspectives represented.

Another key component of evaluating credibility is to evaluate accuracy and thoroughness in the data collected (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 7). This was done through verbatim transcriptions of the interviews to include pauses, hesitations, and emotional responses. Once transcriptions were completed I listened to the recordings again while following along on the transcripts to ensure accuracy (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 8). Additionally, interviewees were asked to check that their transcript accurately depicted their responses from the interviews, as recommended by Rubin and Rubin (2012, p. 8). Though data reduction was completed to help distill the data set into essences and key ideas, making it more manageable to notice patterns, the original detailed transcripts were read and reread throughout the analysis to check that assertions and interpretations matched the original context of the interviews. Thoroughness is demonstrated as evidence from the interviews was used to demonstrate codes and justify themes in the Findings chapter, (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 8) Rubin and Rubin describe another way to demonstrate accuracy and thoroughness in one's study is to bolster believability through building some redundancy into the design (2012, p. 9). One way to do this is to ask similar questions in different ways (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 10). This is evident in my interview questionnaire, where I asked teachers to reflect on and speak about hope as a verb, noun, and adjective. This slight shift in word usage allowed a broader discussion of hope, which enriched the data collected and broadened the perspective, allowing the findings to be more believable. Another way to build in believability is to ask participants to speak from first-hand experience or share stories (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, pp. 10, 12). Questions addressing this are evident in the interview questionnaire.

One final way to evaluate credibility is to write the report transparently. Rubin and Rubin (2012) describe transparency as "when a reader is able to see the process by which the data was collected and analyzed … [and] allows a reader to assess the thoroughness of the design of the work as well as the conscientiousness, sensitivity, and biases of the researcher" (p. 13). The detailed descriptions of the research process in the data collection, analysis, and findings chapters of this thesis demonstrate intent for research transparency.

8 Concluding Hopes

Though teachers are faced with a number of challenges within the practice of education, it is in the midst of these obstacles when the light of hope emerges. Hopeful reflections, both in literature as well as in the personal contemplations of participants in this study provide a starting point to step forward and take action towards establishing hopeful practices that support teachers in response to concerns of teacher burnout. The risk of ignoring hope is to perpetuate cycles of teacher attrition and allow teacher burnout to continue on. Teachers expressed hopes for *Connection, Growth and Engagement* for their students and worked towards a practice based in these hopes, which literature suggests that the implementation of teacher hopeful practice will improve the wellbeing of both students and teachers, as hope is a "we" endeavor. However, based on the concerns raised by teachers, the "we" of hope must expand beyond the relationship between teachers and students. The disconnect felt by teachers with governing bodies have prevented teachers from growing and engaging in ways that would help them to experience the hope they work to provide for their students.

Maslow (2017) wrote, "As we get to know more about what the person legitimately wants and needs for his growth and self-fulfillment, i.e., for psychological health, then we should set ourselves the task of creating the health-fostering culture" (p. 187). The thoughts expressed by participants in this study provide insight into what teachers legitimately want and need that could have implications for their psychological health and their ability to remain sustained in the important, hopeful work of education. As such, it is important to consider how to design a health-fostering culture that brings wellbeing to teachers. A development of a health-fostering culture requires the support and action of the community, especially from the structures that impose standards on teachers without providing adequate resources. The development of a health-fostering culture may require risk and sacrifice of values and priorities already set in place, yet to hope is to allow the imagination to stretch into the "not yet being" and positively anticipate a better future. A hope-focused culture could provide a significant improvement in the wellbeing of teachers, students, families, and the greater community.

I began this thesis talking about the hopelessness I felt in my career, but working on this thesis provided the opportunity to step back and look at the overall view of my role as a teacher again. Through the process of writing this thesis, I was able to connect with my profession in ways I have never experienced and with others I would never have had the opportunity to outside of this research project. I made personal connections with fellow professionals through the interviews, as well as the greater community through my review of literature. In addition to this, I was able to grow through the reflection required to process both the existing literature on the topic, as well as the content and experiences presented by participants, and to bring these perspectives together. Furthermore, the depth of reflection required to complete this work has allowed the time and space to challenge and evaluate preconceptions I had regarding hope and my profession. Finally, I have an opportunity for action. I realize now that choosing this topic and engaging in the research was the first small step of hope, which will continue on with the completion and publication of this thesis. From there, I recognize the importance to continue seeking out the next small steps of action, to balance this with the reflection, all within the context of my personal connections and community.

It is my hope that all teachers have opportunities to explore hope in their practice and be inspired by the possibilities that exist, the "not yet being" that remains within the education system that could bring about a health-fostering culture for school communities. I hope that those in positions of power courageously reflect on the role of hope in communities and the need for action to bring about hope-focused education, that hopes for *Connection*, *Growth* and *Engagement* for teachers, just as the teachers in this study hoped for their students. I hope that we remember to hope as a "we" activity so that all stakeholders in education feel the benefit of hope. If we do, I believe that the result will astound us and initiate the next hopeful possibility and dream for a better life.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Questionnaire

Part A/ Experiencing hope Contextualizing meaning

- **Would you mind telling me about a moment in your life when you felt hopeful?**
- **What memories do you have of experiencing hope as a child between kindergarten and grade 6?** Hopefulness? Hopelessness?
  - **Can you describe how hope was (or was not) present in your schooling?**
- **How has the way you experience hope changed since then?**
- **Can you describe for me people, places or things in your life that are hopeful.**
- **Would you mind explaining for me how you are aware of when you are feeling hopeful?**
  - **What about when you feel hopeless?**
- **How would you define hope?**

Part B/ Hope in your work

- **To what extent did hope factor into your decision of becoming a teacher?**
- **What do you hope for as a teacher?**
- **Where does hope reside in your work?**
  - Perhaps consider people, places, or things
  - Experiences of hope in your work
- **What barriers or obstacles do you encounter that prevent you from feeling hopeful in your work?** *Describe a moment when you felt this way.*
  - **How do you overcome these obstacles?**
- **Please explain how hope inspires the decisions and actions you make in your work. Try and detail as many areas as possible.**
  - *If I were to walk into your classroom and stay for the day, how would I see hope there?*
  - *What about with colleagues, parents, and administration?*
  - **Note to interviewer: Pay attention to what participant says regarding pedagogical practices - i.e., classroom management, curriculum, classroom setup. Follow up on these details and ask for further description.*
- **How do you see your definition of hope that we discussed in the first part of this interview connecting to your work as a teacher?**
  - **Is there anything you would add to your definition, after reflecting on your teaching practice?**

Concluding questions

- **Is there anything else you would like to add to what you have shared with me today? Was there anything you were prepared to discuss that did not come up?**
- **How was your experience in this interview? What did it cause you to think about?**
- **Is there anything you think you will do differently after having this time to**
- **reflect on hope and teaching practice?**

Appendix B: List of codes in shorthand and description

CNXN-CON	Content Connection - When a connection to a concept, idea, or subject matter is present.
CNXN-PERS	Personal Connection - When a personal connection to another individual is mentioned. NOT: A connection to a concept, idea, or subject matter.
COMM	Community - The idea or concept of community is brought up; feeling included in a group of people, a group of people coming together.
CONF	Confidence - Or self-efficacy. Knowledge or feeling that you are able to experience success.
CONT	Control - When the idea control is expressed, such as control over self, others' control over self, self over others, or control of a situation.
GOAL	Goals - hope as expressed through a goal, could be parent, teacher, or student. Can be goal established for self or for others.
GROWTH	Growth - may be related to success in one specific incident or a deeper change in the individual that demonstrates maturity.
IND	Independence - Ability to do something for one's self. Can also be related to autonomy.
INS	Insecurity - Doubt of personal ability or feeling that you cannot achieve a goal.
LIMIT	Limit - when a limit is experienced, could be due to things such as limit of time, money, or personal ability
OPP	Opportunity - being given a chance or a new experience.
PARTNER	Partnership - When the idea of working together is represented.
REFLXN	Reflection - Contemplation of topics discussed. Can be explicitly mentioned or implicitly demonstrated.
RISK	Risk taking - this can include uncertainty of outcome or trying something new. It may be student or teacher related. NOT: Being given a chance (see opportunity)
SAFE	Safety - mentioned as feeling personally safe, fostering a safe environment, or valuing safety. This can include the feeling of trust
SUCCESS	Success - any time the term is represented or a story is shared where an outcome was accomplished. Is not limited to academic, but can also include personal, music related, behavioral, etc.

Appendix C: Participant Recruitment Letter

April 2018

UNIVERSITY OF OULU

SEEKING INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS FOR FINNISH EDUCATION RESEARCH PROJECT

Research topic: The role of hope in the practices of elementary teachers

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My name is Melissa Kapitzke and I taught with Edmonton Public School Board for 2 years as an elementary teacher before taking a leave for my studies. I decided to study in Finland because of the sterling reputation it has internationally for its education system. I am now conducting my master thesis research project and am looking for elementary teachers willing to participate in my study. This project has received ethics approval from the Edmonton Public Ethics Board.

My research is investigating how hope inspires the decisions elementary teachers make regarding their practices. I am looking for 15 elementary teachers who are willing to participate in a 1 hour long interview that will be audio recorded. The location of the interview will be determined by you to ensure the burden of participation is as minimal as possible. I know how busy the life of a teacher is!

All actions will be taken to protect participant confidentiality. If you are interested or would like more information please feel free to contact me at [redacted]

Best regards,
Melissa Kapitzke B.A, B.Ed.

Appendix D: Participant Description of Project and Consent Form

Description of Project and Consent Form

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my research!

My name is Melissa Kapitzke and I am an elementary teacher from Edmonton, Canada where I taught grades 3 and 4 for two years with EPSB. I came to Finland in 2016 to do my Master's degree in the Faculty of Education at the University of Oulu. My thesis project seeks to investigate how teachers understand hope and how this understanding inspires their teaching practices.

As a participant your role is to engage in a conversation with me, which is known as a semi-structured interview. It will be guided by my interview questions as well as your responses. The interview will last between 1 to 1.5 hours. Our conversation will be audio recorded and handwritten notes will be taken that will only be used for academic purposes. You may withdraw from the study at any point and are not obliged to give reasons why. You may also abstain from answering any questions posed during the interview.

All measures will be taken to ensure your confidentiality. The data collected will be stored on a password-protected computer and all physical copies will be kept in a locked cabinet for 5 years after my graduation. I will be the individual responsible for transcribing the interviews so no one else will have access to the audio recordings. You will select a pseudonym that will be used to analyze and report the data to assure anonymity when sharing the data with my thesis supervisor, critical peers, fellow researchers, and should this data be used in future research projects or publications.

As we work within the same professional community at Edmonton Public School Board there is a possibility we will meet again. If anyone inquires about our relationship it is up to your discretion on whether you share your participation in my study or a more neutral response. If I am asked I will simply reply that we have participated in professional development together.

It is of utmost priority that your words are treated with respect and dignity, and that your intentions and meanings are adequately represented. As such, you will have the opportunity to review the transcription of our conversation and correct or clarify anything documented as you see necessary.

Should you wish to contact me with any questions, comments, or requests to withdraw my email is [redacted] or you may reach me by phone at [redacted].

Consent

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Melissa Kapitzke (B.A., B.Ed.), master's student from the Faculty of Education at the University of Oulu, Finland. I understand that I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. I understand that I have the right to decline any questions posed during the interview.

I understand that my participation involves being interviewed by Melissa Kapitzke and that she will audio record our conversation as well as take handwritten notes.

I understand that this data will only be used for academic purposes and will only be shared, after my personal identification has been removed, with Melissa's thesis supervisor, critical peers, and fellow researchers should the research be expanded upon in the future. I understand that my data will be kept for 5 years to possibly be used in other research projects or publications. I understand that after 5 years all data will be destroyed.

I have read through the information page and acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the research project and procedures.
The nature, purpose, and procedures of this research have been sufficiently explained and I hereby consent to participation.

_____	_____	_____
(name printed)	(signature)	(date)

Should you wish to contact me with any questions, comments, or requests to withdraw my email is [redacted] or you may reach me by phone at [redacted].